



**HER SOUL'S INSPIRATION**—Above, Auburn University entomology Ph.D. candidate Esther Ngumbi poses with her parents, Harrison and Bertha Mueni Ngumbi, while sister Faith takes a quick snapshot outside the Shimba Hills National Reserve near Kwale town, Kenya, during Esther's visit home in late 2010. Esther, who will receive her doctorate during Auburn's summer graduation ceremonies, says the degree will be as much her parents' as it is hers because she would not have reached this point in her life had it not been for the encouragement they gave and the sacrifices they made to ensure that their children pursue the highest success possible in their careers and education. At left, this photo of Esther was used on posters and brochures produced last year by the Schlumberger Foundation Faculty for the Future program.

## 'Reach for the Stars'

**Entomology Ph.D. a Dream Come True for Kenya Native**

by JAMIE CREAMER

*As a child, she dreamed of someday becoming an accountant.*

*It wasn't because she was particularly fond of math and numbers. It was because she once traveled to the city with her parents, both teachers, to get their paychecks, and the people who worked in the paycheck office were accountants, and that paycheck office was air-conditioned.*

*"Ah," the youngster marveled. "One day, I will be an accountant, so I can sit at a desk in a very nice office where it is always cool."*

*But then the girl discovered science.*

Harrison and Bertha Ngumbi (n-goom-bee) might be starting to get a little jittery right about now. Neither has ever driven a vehicle, much less even been near an airplane, yet in early August, they will take off from Moi International Airport in Mombasa, Kenya, for a 33-hour transcontinental and transoceanic flight into Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, Ga., USA.

They are coming to America for a momentous event that will take place in a large sports facility located in Auburn, Ala., on Saturday, Aug. 6. On that day, during Auburn University's summer 2011 commencement ceremony at Auburn Arena, they will witness the awarding of a doctor of philosophy degree in entomology to the second-born of their five children, Esther.

"I talked to my father just after they got their passports," Esther says as she sits in the Funchess Hall entomology lab, which is air-conditioned, where she's conducted research on pesticide-free methods of controlling crop-destroying insects for almost three years, "and he put it simply: 'I close my eyes, I imagine this day, and then happiness just fills my heart. That day, I will be the most happiest dad in the entire world.'"

Esther's right up there with him.

"The day I get my Ph.D. is going to be the best day of my life," she says. "It is beyond my wildest dream come true."

Indeed, as a child growing up in the impoverished Kenyan village of Mabafweni, Esther Ngumbi could not possibly have grasped the concept of a future as a scientist with a doctoral degree.

"When I entered university, and they said I would get a B.S. (bachelor's degree), I didn't know what a B.S. was," she recalls. "And I had no idea what field I would study."

It didn't take long for her to figure that one out. She started at Kenyatta University in Nairobi in 1996 through a government higher-ed loan program for financially needy Kenyans, and an insect biology class early in her college career whetted a near-insatiable fascination with science.

Three years later, Esther earned her B.S. in zoology and biochemistry, and in 2002, she received her master's in entomology. But her parents always had encouraged her and her siblings to take their educations to the highest levels possible, and Esther knew she wasn't there yet. She had one more degree to go.

"I was in Israel as a visiting scholar and was thinking of going to Germany for my Ph.D., but everyone said no, no, the very best Ph.D. is in the U.S.," she says. "So I started looking, looking for anything, any opportunity."

In her search, she was most impressed by far by the research of Henry Fadamiro, associate professor of entomology at Auburn, whose expertise

is in integrated pest management and biological control of crop insect pests. The Oxford-educated entomologist, who earlier this year was awarded an Alumni Professorship by the Auburn Alumni Association, didn't have a graduate-student opening at the time, so in 2006, Esther started grad school at the University of Idaho.

Staying in touch with Fadamiro soon paid off, however, such that by spring 2008, Esther was at Auburn, conducting doctoral research under Fadamiro's oversight on parasitoid wasps for the control of corn-attacking insects.

Esther's keen interest in crop-pest management is not just happenstance. It's personally motivated; she knows what going hungry is like.

In Kenya, her parents' teaching wages were meager, and what food the family had, they raised.

"We depended on our farm to survive, and as I was growing up, there were years in which we almost lost all our crops to insect pests," she says. "Then we would lack food."

"I chose a career that would permit me to study these insects and discover sustainable ways to control them so that farmers can have plenty of harvest so that fewer people in the world go to bed hungry," says Esther, who since coming to Auburn has been a leader in the university's War on Hunger campaign.

But contributing to the world-hunger solution is not Esther's only passion. Just as fervent is her determination to inspire girls in Kenya to recognize their talents and develop their potential to the fullest.

"As I was growing up, I did not have a mentor; there was no female scientist to be a role

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# View from AGhill



Last month I had the opportunity to spend 12 days in China visiting some of the Auburn College of Agriculture's partners at universities in Beijing, Xi'an, Wuhan and Shanghai. It was a tremendous experience. China has changed dramatically since I last visited in 2006. There were numerous construction projects in each city we visited, focused on building new businesses, university buildings and high-rise apartment buildings to accommodate the rapid movement of their population from the countryside into the cities. Nearly half of China's 1.3 billion people now live in cities, making it the largest urban population of any nation in the world. I met with many faculty and university administrators during my visit. Their top concern was the rapid urbanization of China. Kids are leaving the countryside and moving to cities to improve their economic future. University leaders are very concerned about a future labor

shortage for farming and food production and the impact that may have on food security.

Does this sound familiar? The 2010 census showed that during the past decade, nearly half of the counties in Alabama had a decrease in population. All of those counties are rural and represent areas of intense agricultural and timber production. More than 70 percent of Alabama residents now reside in only 19 of our 67 counties. We have seen this trend across our nation during the past century. Since political districts are created based upon population, this trend toward urbanization concentrates political representation in the urban areas. While agriculture is the largest industry in Alabama, there are fewer legislators representing its stakeholders' issues. I would encourage you to spend some time with your local legislators and let them know how important the agricultural and timber industries are to the economic health of Alabama.

On another note, "Give Back, Get Back" is the kickoff theme for a newly energized Ag Hill Dean's Society. Formerly known as the Ag 21 Dean's Club, the society offers several donation levels and extra perks for members, such as home-game tailgate parties, special events and free admission to many College of Ag activities. Three levels of giving are offered, including one for young alumni who are just starting their careers and philanthropic giving but want to become more involved in College of Agriculture events and programs. To learn more about the Ag Hill Dean's Society, contact Don Crow at doc0002@auburn.edu, Katie Hardy at hardykc@auburn.edu or 334-844-1475 or visit the website at www.ag.auburn.edu/deansociety. This is a great opportunity to give back to Auburn while reuniting with old Auburn friends, making new ones and becoming more involved with the College of Agriculture family.

**Bill Batchelor**  
DEAN, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
DIRECTOR, ALABAMA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

(REACH FOR THE STARS' from page 1)

model, to talk with me and encourage me and show me that it was possible to achieve great dreams," she says. "I want to change that."

She's already working on it. While visiting her family in Mabafweni in December, Esther, a steering-committee member of Auburn's Women in Science and Engineering Institute, met with high-school students to talk about her studies in the U.S., and then, in early 2011, worked with WISE coordinator Bonnie Wilson to launch the WISE Partnerships in Kenya program in which Auburn undergraduates are serving as pen-pal mentors to those Kenyan students.

Esther, described by Fadamiro as "a natural leader, a selfless person and a role model for young girls," has as her long-term goal the establishment of an international science and leadership center in Kenya that will equip and mentor young talented African girls for future careers in science, engineering and leadership. In mid-August, she will start a postdoctoral program of study at Georgia Tech and then will return to Kenya to teach at a university.

In 2010, Esther was awarded a prestigious Schlumberger Foundation Faculty for the Future Fellowship grant through a program that provides substantial grants to women from developing countries to pursue Ph.D. or post-doc study in the physical sciences at top universities abroad. That grant was renewed this year, bringing the total award to \$88,600. She is one of only 194 pioneering women scientists from 54 countries to become a Faculty for the Future fellow and the only Auburn student ever to have received the honor.



**INVOLVED**—Esther Ngumbi listens with rapt attention to a presentation during the 2011 Clinton Global Initiative University held in California in April. She was one of 1,000-plus students from 349 schools, 90 countries and all 50 states invited to participate in this year's conference. The CGI's goal is to devise and implement innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

And when she graduates Aug. 6, she will be the first female ever from her village of 20,000 to hold a Ph.D.

That her parents will be here for the big day is only fitting. "My graduation is simply their graduation," she says. "They have been the greatest source of my inspiration.

"My parents had to sacrifice almost everything to keep us in school," she says. "I remember vividly how my parents would go to collect their paychecks, but eat nothing before coming back in the evening, hungry and tired. I wondered at their ability to be in the city, in the midst of all the best foods, with money to purchase that food, but choosing not to spend it on them so that we could go to school.

"Such determination in my parents inspires me and gives me the strength to reach for the stars and persevere against challenges, however daunting they seem."

## Details

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## Horsing Around

# Champions, Again!

## Equestrian Team Wins 2011 National Championship

by KATIE JACKSON

It's been a good year for national championships at Auburn, and the most recent champions have a direct connection to the College of Agriculture.

The Auburn University equestrian team won the 2011 Varsity Equestrian National Championship held in April in Waco, Texas. The team, which also clinched the national championship in 2006, placed first in hunt seat competition and fourth in Western and was named the overall national champions. They won the 2011 SEC championship held in March as well.

In addition to those team wins, Auburn riders claimed three of the four championship MVP spots: Grace Socha was the winner in fences, Maggie McAlary was the top rider in flat and Paige Monfore claimed reining honors.

"I knew this was a special group coming in, and these past three days, they proved it," said head coach Greg Williams just after the win. "This national championship for the Auburn fans is due to the hard work of coaches Lindsay Neubarth and Lisa Helfer and a group of girls that will do anything for each other."

The team's success is all about teamwork, and an important and unique member of that support team is the College of Agriculture and its academic program. One reason that the college has been so involved in the equestrian team's development is that the team began as a club sport through the college in 1996. In 2002, it was elevated to a varsity sport and co-sponsored by the Athletics Department and the College of Agriculture, which Williams says is a win-win for the team members. That partnership improves students' grades, enhances relationships among the students and the staff, enhances team and personal goals and strengthens the program.

Through the partnership, the four-legged team members—the horses—are cared for at the college's horse center. The two-legged athletes—the young women—are mentored by their coaches, who are affiliated with the Auburn University Athletics Department. And, though not all team members choose this for a major, the animal sciences department offers an equine science degree option that helps these and other students pursue long-term careers in the equestrian world.

"It's a natural fit," says Williams of this partnership and its implication for further growth of the equine program at Auburn and the horse industry in the state. "We are a land-grant school with an animal sciences department



**CELEBRATING AUBURN STYLE**—Members of the Auburn University equestrian team were able to celebrate their national championship Auburn style, this time rolling trees outside Jordan-Hare stadium.



and an equine science major as well as a veterinary college that can address horse health issues for the state's rapidly growing horse industry."

In addition, the team does its own form of outreach by hosting horse camps throughout the summer, which bring in hundreds of young riders each year to improve their competition skills, learn more about collegiate riding while riding college horses and give them a great feel for Auburn University and the College of Agriculture.

"We have risen to the top as a program as far as winning goes, but we have so much more we want to accomplish," says Williams. "Through the efforts of these hard-working young ladies, Auburn University has been put on the equestrian map in a big way. With the backing of the College of Agriculture and Athletics Department, I think we will be drawing the lines on the map."

## College of Ag Website Updated

The College of Agriculture's website has a new look in its first update since 2005.

New features on the site include a large rotating image that links to stories about the college's academic, research and outreach functions and a wider screen format, which is tailored to perform well on mobile devices.

Many familiar features were retained, such as Picture This!, the College of Ag's online feature that showcases photography by members of the ag family; the news and information

link, which connects to a listing of all available media from the office of Ag Communications and Marketing; and a calendar. The navigational structure is similar to the previous site and should be familiar to viewers.

The redesign was coordinated by the AU Office of Communications and Marketing along with the Office of Information Technology and was built using more modern coding, which will allow for easier updates and future redesigns. Visit it at www.ag.auburn.edu.



## College of Ag Names Student Award Winners



**COMER MEDAL AWARDED**—Megan McClosky, center, was presented the prestigious Comer Medal at a special ceremony held this spring at the Davis Arboretum. Pictured with McClosky are, left, College of Ag Associate Dean Paul Patterson and, right, College of Ag Dean Bill Batchelor.

The Auburn University College of Agriculture presented awards to four outstanding students in May, including the prestigious Comer Medal.

The 2011 recipient of the Comer Medal for Excellence in Agricultural Sciences is Megan McClosky of Bay Minette.

Three Comer Medals for Excellence are awarded annually to outstanding seniors in the agricultural, biological and physical sciences. Winners must maintain either the best examination or best class record in this branch of their studies.

This was McClosky's second year to be selected for the Comer Medal for Excellence. Last year she was chosen for the award but deferred her graduation to spring 2011 after being accepted into veterinary school as a junior, and the 2010 award was given to another deserving student. McClosky began her studies in the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine in fall 2010, where she has continued to excel academically.

McClosky also served as the student marshal for the spring 2011 commencement ceremony in May, graduating with a bachelor's degree in animal sciences. She was chosen by the College of Ag scholarship committee based on her 4.0 grade point average and the leadership, citizenship, character and professional skills she has displayed while in the college.

Audrey Johnson from Vero Beach, Fla., who graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics, received both the College of

Agriculture's Dean's Award and the SGA Outstanding Student Award.

The Dean's Award is presented to students who have demonstrated leadership and service to the college and exhibited excellence in scholastic accomplishment. It is selected by the college scholarship committee and the associate dean.

The Student Government Association Outstanding Student Award is given to students who are juniors or seniors and have completed a minimum of 55 percent of all credit hours at Auburn University; have a grade point average in the top 10 percent of their school or college; and exhibit involvement in college/school activities, university activities, community service, leadership and/or professional/career potential. Johnson was selected by the College of Ag Scholarship Committee.

Johnson is beginning her master's degree in agricultural economics under the direction of Deacue Fields, associate professor of agricultural economics, studying food and agricultural marketing and Internet-based marketing.

John Lee from Pembroke, Ga., is the recipient of this year's President's Award.

The President's Award recognizes the outstanding graduate in each school or college who has completed at least three semesters at Auburn University with a minimum scholastic average of 3.40, and who exhibits outstanding qualities of leadership, citizenship, character and promise of professional ability.

Lee graduated with a degree in agricultural economics in December and is pursuing a master's degree in accounting while interning with the firm Carr, Riggs and Ingram, which has offices throughout the Southeast.

John Starnes of Prattville is the recipient of the 2011 Claude Hardee Memorial Award in Agriculture.

The Hardee Award recognizes an outstanding senior student in the college based on scholarship, leadership and character. Individuals are nominated by their department head.

To learn more about these students and awards go to [www.ag.auburn.edu/dean/studentawards2011.php](http://www.ag.auburn.edu/dean/studentawards2011.php).

## Department Offers Aquaculture Education from a Distance



Enhancing professionalism in the fisheries and aquaculture industries is the goal of a new Auburn University program that provides Auburn expertise and training to people around the globe.

The program, Certification for Aquaculture Professionals, is being led by Antonio Garza de Yta, an Auburn Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture alumnus who has been literally traveling the world to spread the word about CAP.

The idea began two or three years ago when Garza was working on development plans for the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization. In the process, he recognized a need for professionalization of the aquaculture industry as found in some industries.

"A lot of people working in aquaculture right now have not had the opportunity of receiving formal training," he says. "Regardless of their formal education, they don't have the technical background needed to serve the aquaculture industry."

The need for sharing knowledge about aquaculture, however, has never been greater, noted Garza. World demand for seafood is growing at unprecedented rates. The FAO predicts global aquaculture production must double by 2030 to keep pace with demand, which represents an increase of almost 40 million tons and places the aquaculture industry as one of the fastest-growing segments of agriculture in the world.

With that increased demand for seafood products comes an increasing need for trained aquaculture professionals. "In most countries around the world, especially those in tropical regions, there are not enough aquaculture specialists," says Garza. "At best, the needs of governments and industry are not fulfilled. At worst, the potential economic opportunities of the industry are not being developed."

And who better to lead that educational effort than faculty and staff from Auburn's Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures, which has long been recognized as the world leader in aquaculture education and training?

With that in mind, Garza went to department head David Rouse who fully supported the idea of developing an on-line training program for industry personnel such as government agency employees, extension workers and farm managers. "We have provided short-term training in aquaculture for more than 30 years," says Rouse. "Technology now exists through distance education to reach so many more people around the world."

"Our CAP program is for people on the front line of aquaculture," he continues. It also is ideal for salespeople, and farm managers who want to increase their knowledge and understanding of aquaculture.

Working with others in the Auburn fisheries and allied aquacultures department, Garza developed a list of 10 topics to be covered and a syllabus for the program, then found specialists in those areas, primarily among Auburn's faculty.

To earn certification, which typically takes about six months to complete, participants must take all 10 modules and obtain a passing grade of 70 percent for each module. That certification is good for three years, after which recertification is required and can be obtained through retesting or by taking additional modules that will be offered at a reduced price.

Graduates also have access to all module material, virtual workshops, discussion forums, weekly seminars and advice from aquaculture specialists from Auburn and across the world.

Once certification is obtained, students have access to seminars, publications and other continuing education opportunities.

In October 2010, a pilot CAP class kicked off in Mexico and, by February 2011, 30 people had graduated from the CAP program. CAP training agreements have been finalized or are in the works with governments and corporate clients in Mexico, the U.S., Brazil and several other countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Learn more at: [www.cap.auburn.edu](http://www.cap.auburn.edu).

## Faculty and Staff Accomplishments

**Nannan Liu**, Faculty Endowed Professor of entomology and plant pathology, co-authored an article regarding the genome sequence of the mosquito species *Culex quinquefasciatus* in the Oct. 1 issue of the journal *Science*.

**Rachel Sharpe** and **Hamilton Bryant** of the Department of Agronomy and Soils spent several days in April at the Montgomery Zoo volunteering for the Earth Day at the Zoo celebration. The two set up a display featuring soybean-based products, different stages of cotton and colored cotton. During the event they interacted with more than 2,500 school-age children.

**Kathy Lawrence**, associate professor of entomology and plant pathology, is serving as editor-in-chief for the international journal *Nematropica*.

**Reddy Munagala**, associate research professor of entomology and plant pathology, is serving as organizing chairman for the First Asian PGPR Congress to be held in June in Hyderabad, India.



Dale Coleman

**Dale Coleman**, associate professor of animal sciences, was named the 2011 National Academic Advising Association's Outstanding Faculty Advisor for Region 4, which includes Alabama, the Caribbean, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Puerto Rico. He also was awarded a Certificate of Merit for the national NACADA award level. Coleman will be honored at the NACADA annual conference to be held in October in Denver, Colo.

**Werner Bergen**, professor of animal sciences, co-chaired and gave an address at the "Genetic Polymorphisms as Sources of Nutritional and Metabolic Variation" symposium, part of the Experimental Biology 2011 meeting held recently in Washington, D.C., which drew more than 14,000 attendees.

**Henry Kinnucan**, professor of agricultural economics and rural sociology, was one of six Auburn faculty members to receive the Provost's Award for Sponsoring Graduate Scholarship, recognizing outstanding service by faculty in the support of graduate scholarship.

**Kelley Terry**, a contracts and grants specialist with biosystems engineering and the AAES, was chosen for an Auburn University Spirit of Excellence award recently.

A paper co-written by Department of Horticulture faculty and staff members **Edgar Vinson**, **Floyd Woods**, **Joe Kemble** and **Raymond Kessler** was chosen by the American Society of Horticultural Science as the ASHA's Outstanding Vegetable Publication Award winner for papers published in 2010.

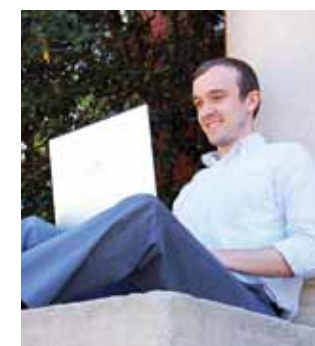
**Robin Huettel**, who retired this spring as a professor of entomology and plant pathology, was selected as a fellow of the Society of Nematologists. She will receive the award at the SON annual meeting in Corvallis, Ore., this summer. Huettel served on the Auburn faculty for 10 years, coming to Auburn after a distinguished career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Four staff members in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology recently received promotions. They include **Marla Eva**, who was promoted to research lab tech IV; **Jan Garrett**, promoted to research fellow IV; **Scott Moore**, promoted to research associate; and **Kristie Siggers**, promoted to research lab tech IV.

**Gareth Morgan-Jones**, Distinguished University Professor in entomology and plant pathology, retired in March after 38 years of service and will be appointed an emeritus professor. He authored a 999-page monograph on the "The Genera of Hyphomycetes," published by CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre, an Institute of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Science, in Utrecht.

**Henry Fadamiro**, associate professor of entomology and plant pathology, received the Award for Excellence in IPM by the Southeastern Branch-Entomological Society of America and was appointed a visiting professor of entomology and pest management at Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria.

## Auburn's College of Ag Offering Certificate Courses Online



Professionals working in the fields of agriculture, conservation and natural resources or for environmental agencies have a new online opportunity to take classes for certificate courses through Auburn University's College of Agriculture.

**STUDY ANYWHERE**—New College of Ag distance education programs allow students everywhere to study anywhere.

## Student Accomplishments

**Ting Li** and **Bill Reid**, both graduate students in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology working with **Nannan Liu**, recently participated in the AU Graduate Student Forum and advanced to the Graduate Student Symposium where Reid won first place.

**Prithwiraj Das**, a Ph.D. student in entomology and plant pathology working with associate professor Henry Fadamiro, was awarded first place in the Student Poster Competition (physiology section) at the annual meeting of the Entomological Society of America held recently in Indianapolis, Ind.

**Will Budnick**, a student in fisheries and allied aquacultures, and **Vernon Del Anderson**, a student in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, were awarded AU Undergraduate Research Fellowships for the coming year. Their scholarship faculty mentors are **Jim Stoeckel** and **Alan Wilson**, both assistant professors in the Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures.

Three College of Agriculture graduate students have been selected by the Graduate Student Council as outstanding graduate students for 2010-11. **Ermano Affuso**, a Ph.D. student in agricultural economics and rural sociology working under the supervision of professor **Diane Hite**, and **Esther Ngumbi**, a Ph.D. student in entomology and plant pathology working under the guidance of associate professor **Henry Fadamiro**, were named as outstanding doctoral students. **Michael Chislock**, a fisheries and allied aquacultures student working under the direction of assistant professor **Alan Wilson**, was named among the top master's students. Ngumbi was also awarded a \$45,000 Schlumberger Foundation Faculty for the Future Fellowship grant and selected to attend the Clinton Global Initiative University annual meeting in San Diego in May (see story on page 1).

Auburn's soil judging team finished second (out of 21 universities) at the 51st Annual Collegiate Soil Judging Contest hosted in April by Oregon State University. **Brandon Smith** was the top scoring individual in the contest (out of 84 contestants). Team members include Smith, **Scott Russell**, **Cooper Nichols**, **Adam Newton** and **Jennifer Barnes**. Team coach is **Joey Shaw**, Alumni Professor in the Department of Agronomy and Soils. View a video from an Oregon TV station of the soil judging contest at [www.ktvz.com/video/27734154/index.html](http://www.ktvz.com/video/27734154/index.html).



**PLANET WINS**—A team of horticulture department students representing Auburn's Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) chapter won big at the PLANET Student Career Days competition held this spring in Joliet, Ill. Meredith Jedlicka placed first in the Computer Aided Landscape Design event and sixth in External 3D Design. Channing Leger and Brad Nordstrom finished fourth in the Wood Construction event, Cody Key placed eighth in Exterior Landscape Design and Jim Davis finished in eighth place in Compact Excavator Operation. The Auburn team, under the guidance of faculty members Joe Eakes, Amy Wright and Carolyn Robinson, placed 17th overall out of 60 colleges and universities.

The certificate courses do not require formal admission to Auburn University but are useful in preparing students for graduate school and for continuing education that helps professionals enhance their knowledge base. Students receive a Certificate of Completion instead of a transcript.

Certificate courses are offered at a reduced cost compared with courses taken for academic credit. Certificate courses offered this summer are basic crop science; basic soil science; turfgrass management; plant genetics and crop improvement; poultry health, introduction to entomology; and general plant pathology. Interested students should apply by Aug. 17 for fall registration. Students can also enroll in graduate-level courses or a graduate distance education degree program to earn master's degrees in agronomy and soils.

To learn more, visit [www.ag.auburn.edu/students/distanceeducation](http://www.ag.auburn.edu/students/distanceeducation) or contact Megan Ross at [mhr0001@auburn.edu](mailto:mhr0001@auburn.edu) or 334-844-3201.

From the Field

## Hit But Not Hurt

### April Tornadoes Damage Outlying AAES Units

by KATIE JACKSON

When tornadoes tore through Alabama on April 27, at least two Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station research units were damaged—though, thankfully, no staff members were injured.

According to Jim Bannon, director of outlying units for the AAES, the North Alabama Horticulture Research Center in Cullman and the Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center in Belle Mina were the most significantly



**DESTRUCTIVE STORMS**—A tornado that tore through Madison County on April 27 took out a number of structures and vehicles at the Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center in Belle Mina as well as doing damage to the North Alabama Horticulture Research Center in Cullman. Despite the mess, no one was injured and much of the debris has already been cleaned up.

impacted of all the AAES units. Other units experienced power outages due to local damage but sustained no substantial physical damage to their facilities.

“One of the employees at the Cullman unit lost her home but was able to stay with relatives. Otherwise, all employees are safe and accounted for,” Bannon reported shortly after the storms.

Of the two units, the Tennessee Valley REC was most heavily impacted, sustaining \$429,000 worth of damage to buildings and \$32,000 to equipment.

“We were fortunate. We had a lot of damage but we have something to build upon, unlike a lot of other people who were hit by the tornadoes,” says Chet Norris, TVREC director. “The main challenge we faced was cleaning up debris and that went remarkably well,” thanks in large part to a track hoe supplied by the AAES’s Agricultural Land and Resource Management group in Auburn.

He adds that people both in the local community and even from as far away as Auburn brought them food and other necessities immediately after the storm, for which he and the staff are deeply grateful.

“Now we are just behind in planting,” Norris says, noting that planting had already been delayed because the area had received a tremendous amount of rain even before the storms hit.

According to Bannon, damage at the North Alabama Horticulture Research Center included loss of a greenhouse that was still standing but twisted out of shape by the winds, a shop door, one vehicle and shingles off a residence. Many trees surrounding the unit as well as trees nearby were uprooted.

The Sand Mountain Research and Extension Center in Crossville was intact but had no power for several days after the storms, and the Upper Coastal Plain Agricultural Research Center in Winfield had no damage although severe damage occurred to towns nearby.

“Recovery efforts at both units are progressing well,” says Bannon. “Many thanks are extended to all who have helped with the cleanup and recovery efforts.”

## Biosensors Will Rapidly Detect Food Pathogens

by JAMIE CREAMER



Jacek Wower

College of Agriculture animal sciences professor and biochemist Jacek Wower has received a \$380,000 National Science Foundation grant for a study titled “Biosensing of non-coding RNAs using nucleic acid-based technology.”

In simpler terms, Wower, whose research focuses on biological processes at the molecular level, aims to create innovative technologies that will prevent farm animals from getting or spreading disease from one to another. An essential component of these technologies

are RNA aptamers, nucleic acids that recently have emerged as a class of nano-tools that rival antibodies in diagnostic applications because they can be produced quickly and at low cost.

“Current methods for the detection of pathogens require expensive instruments and well-trained personnel,” Wower says. “There is a need for sensors that are user-friendly, economical to produce, easy to store and usable in real-life environments such as farms, food production and distribution companies, hospitals and schools.”

To meet this need, Wower and his research team will use genetic material from invading, disease-causing organisms to develop biosensors that in a matter of minutes can detect food-contaminating bacteria that frequently infect humans, animals and plants. The biosensors will use the biochemical and physical properties of RNA to produce flexible, programmable sensors for the detection of RNA in pathogens.

“Our research team will build a robust detection platform system that could easily be reprogrammed to detect any bacterium and could be operated by untrained personnel,” he says. “Our sensor will also allow for differentiation between dead and live pathogens.”

The tools Wower and his team develop will allow scientists to selectively detect a wide range of microRNAs in applications ranging from basic science to environmental engineering and medicine.

Also as part of this project, Wower intends to incorporate his research into university undergraduate- and graduate-level courses and work with local schoolteachers as well.

## In Memoriam

**E.T. York**, 88, chancellor emeritus of the State University System of Florida and a College of Agriculture alumnus, passed away April 15 in Gainesville, Fla. York and his widow, Vam Cardwell York (an Auburn alumnae), have been generous donors to Auburn and the college, giving more than \$600,000 to the E.T. and Vam York Endowed Fund for Excellence in International Agriculture and \$150,000-plus to an endowment establishing the E.T. York Distinguished Lecturer Series. Memorial contributions may be made to Trinity United Methodist Church, 4000 NW 53rd Avenue, Gainesville, Fla.; Haven Hospice, 4200 NW 90th Boulevard, Gainesville, Fla.; or any charity of choice.

**R. Oneal “Smitty” Smitherman**, professor emeritus of fisheries and allied aquacultures, passed away April 14 in Birmingham. He was recognized in the U.S. and internationally for the impact of his research, which was instrumental to the current farming practices of catfish, tilapia, redfish, snapper, salmon, shrimp and other species. He also left a legacy of beauty through his much beloved native azaleas, plantings of which grace the Auburn University Davis Arboretum, others parts of the Auburn campus and many private gardens. Donations in his honor may be made to the arboretum, 334-844-5770, or to the Alabama ALS Association at <http://webal.alsa.org>.

## Survey: Steep Investment, Water Shortages Limit Use of Crop Irrigation in Alabama

by JAMIE CREAMER

In a brutally hot, bone-dry summer, irrigation can be a farmer’s salvation, but even so, a majority of non-irrigating Alabama farmers say they’ll stay that way because installing, operating and maintaining an irrigation system would not be cost effective.

And among farmers across the state who do have irrigation on part or all of their cropland, a third say they won’t be improving or expanding their systems because it just wouldn’t pay, according to a survey conducted by a team of Alabama Ag Experiment Station researchers at Auburn University.

The survey of a random sampling of small, medium-sized and large farming operations statewide was conducted as part of a study to determine why the use of irrigation isn’t widespread in Alabama. The survey assessed farmers’ views of irrigation as a risk-reduction and productivity-enhancing tool and sought to identify the major obstacles they say stand between them and the adoption of irrigation technology.

“Insufficient rainfall jeopardizes producers’ crops and livelihoods, but irrigation can ease plant stress, boost yields in terms of quantity and quality, increase profit margins and strengthen the economy,” rural sociology professor and project leader Joe Molnar says. “Our goal was to gather information that can give farmers, policymakers and others a greater understanding of the real and farmer-perceived barriers to the adoption of irrigation techniques. This perspective is vital for efforts to increase the use of irrigation.”

In the survey, the most frequently cited reason for not irrigating among farms of all sizes



**CROP INSURANCE**—Circle W Farms in Henry County uses a center-pivot system to irrigate its peanut and corn fields. Partner Sammy Williams says that the majority of the farm’s cropland is under irrigation and that the returns continue to justify the investment. Though irrigation provides a critical insurance that sufficient soil moisture will be available when needed during periods of drought or inconsistent rainfall, non-irrigating farmers say the cost of installing and operating a system and the lack of surface water and groundwater sources are the major roadblocks that prevent them from irrigating.

was “sufficient soil moisture”; nonetheless, about two-thirds of the farmers without irrigation and a third of those with said their profit margins were too slim for them to invest in irrigation.

About half of the non-irrigating survey respondents said shortages of surface water and groundwater prevent them from putting in any irrigation. Some 29 percent said they don’t ir-

rigate their crops because they don’t own the land they’re farming, and 23 percent said they won’t be irrigating because they’re getting out of farming altogether.

Survey results indicate that three-quarters of Alabama farmers say they get most of their information about irrigation from fellow producers who have irrigation, Auburn researchers and Extension agents. The least helpful information source is media reports, followed by private consultants, state and federal officials, the Internet and irrigation equipment dealers.

Six out of every 10 farmers in the state said they would be more likely to install or improve irrigation systems if a cost-share or subsidized-loan program were available.

Molnar says results of the scientific survey indicate that broader availability of irrigation technical information and assistance, as well as cost-sharing and policy changes, could help facilitate the installation and use of irrigation.

“Strong commodity prices could make irrigation more attractive to farmers seeking stable and expanded yields from irrigated crops, so research and extension efforts should focus on identifying a portfolio of supplemental irrigation approaches that fit the humid Southeast, and the diversity of resource situations and needs of Alabama’s vegetable and row-crop producers,” Molnar says.

An online Alabama Ag Experiment Station bulletin, “Farm Operator Perceptions of Barriers to the Use of Irrigation in Alabama,” provides complete survey results. Find the bulletin at [www.aaes.auburn.edu/comm/pubs/bulletins/bull674.pdf](http://www.aaes.auburn.edu/comm/pubs/bulletins/bull674.pdf).

For additional information, contact Molnar at [molnajt@auburn.edu](mailto:molnajt@auburn.edu) or 334-844-5615.

## Ground Broken on New Administration Building at Tennessee Valley REC



**DIGGING IN**—Shoveling skills were tested on May 25 when ground was officially broken for the new Alabama Farmers Federation Administrative Building at the Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center in Belle Mina. Pictured at the ceremony are, from left, Jim Bannon, director of outlying units for the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station; Bill Batchelor, AAES director and dean of the College of Agriculture; Jerry Newby, president of the Alabama Farmers Federation; Paul Pinyon, executive director for the Federation; Paul Mask, assistant director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System; and Chet Norris, director of the TVREC.

Ground was broken May 25 for a new administrative building at the Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center in Belle Mina made possible by a \$1-million donation from the Alabama Farmers Federation.

The TVREC is one of 15 research facilities operated across the state by the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station. Established in 1927, the TVREC has always focused on helping area farmers increase their profits while reducing agriculture’s environmental impact.

The 755-acre Tennessee Valley REC, nationally recognized for its cotton research program, also is known for its work on soybeans, corn and grain crops and its cutting-edge irrigation research. In recent years the center has become a hub of precision agriculture research aimed at using the latest technology to reduce the costs and inputs of farming while also making it more environmentally friendly. It is one of six research and Extension centers across the state that house not only AAES researchers but also Alabama Cooperative Extension System experts.

As is the case at many of the AAES’s research facilities, the TVREC has long needed to update its facilities. The new Alabama Farmers Federation Administrative Building will create meeting space for TVREC field days and other agricultural and community gatherings and add much-needed office space for the research and Extension employees and scientists working at Belle Mina.

The deadly tornado outbreak that ravaged Alabama April 27 did damage buildings and some equipment at the TVREC, and though this new facility will not replace any of those damaged buildings, it will help mitigate some of the effects of that damage.

Jerry Newby, president of the Federation and Alfa Insurance companies who pledged the money for the administrative building in 2007, said renovating and upgrading the TVREC will support farming and benefit farmers throughout the state.

“When the College of Agriculture approached us about making a contribution, we looked for a project that would benefit Alabama farmers both now and in the future,” Newby says. “Improving the facilities at the Tennessee Valley center will meet this goal by providing researchers and Extension personnel the tools they need to serve rural Alabama.”

“Not only is it our state’s premier cotton research facility, but it is also home to projects that focus on livestock, horticulture, grain crops, precision agriculture and much more” he adds.

“The Tennessee Valley REC is a major center of agricultural research and Extension in the Tennessee Valley, and the farmers and scientists who utilize the center deserve to have a state-of-the-art facility,” says Bill Batchelor, director of the AAES and dean of Auburn’s College of Agriculture. “The significant generosity of the Federation will make that possible and we are extremely grateful.”



**AG CLASSIC RESULTS**—This year's Ag Classic was another big success. The event brought in a little over \$10,000, which will go toward scholarships, and drew 40 golfers on Wednesday, April 27, 132 golfers on Thursday and 11 anglers. The event also had 13 hole sponsors on Thursday including Bonnie Plants, First South Farm Credit, Wilton's Catering, Alabama Ag Credit and Alabama Farm Credit, Alabama Cattlemen's Association, TK Farms, Adams Beverages, Alabama Poultry & Egg Association, Alabama Peanut Producers and Conecuh Sausage. Thanks to all who participated!

## Horticulture's Toomer's Oaks Will Help Fund Endowment

Sixty-seven live oaks that Gary Keever grew from acorns he gathered four years ago 'neath the hallowed trees at the Auburn nation's most revered corner are doing remarkably well. These direct descendants of the Toomer's oaks are well established and hardy and stand anywhere from six to eight feet tall.

And now Keever, the Auburn horticulture professor who since Feb. 18 has been the university's official spokesman on the status of the poisoned Toomer's oaks, and the Department of Horticulture are making the trees available. Through a donation of \$1,000, you can own a true Auburn icon, receive a \$780 charitable tax deduction and support a valuable cause.

Working with the College of Ag's Office of Development, Keever and the Department of Horticulture will use the donations to complete funding of the Dr. Thomas H. Dodd Jr. Endowed Professorship in Horticulture that was established last fall as part of a university-wide campaign to fund 81 new professorships in one year.



**STRAIGHT FROM TOOMER'S**—Horticulture professor Gary Keever inspects one of the 67 Toomer's oak seedlings he has grown from acorns he collected four years ago. Keever and his department are donating the six- to eight-foot direct descendants of the oaks at Toomer's Corner as part of a campaign to raise funds for an endowed professorship.

Ag development officer Mark Wilton emphasized that the Dodd tree campaign is not in competition with and has the blessings of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences' popular Toomer's Oaks Seedlings Program, which for several years has been selling Baby Toomer's Oaks for \$100 each, with all proceeds going toward forestry school student scholarships. Demand for those seedlings has soared since the Feb. 17 announcement that the two beloved trees at Toomer's Corner had been poisoned, creating a shortage that has resulted in a lottery system.

"The only physical difference between these trees and the forestry seedlings is that these are older and larger," Keever says.

For more information about horticulture's Thomas Dodd Toomer's oak campaign, contact

Delaine Borden at [bordedp@auburn.edu](mailto:bordedp@auburn.edu) or 334-844-4986.

Keever does offer a word of caution for potential purchasers of any Toomer's oaks' offspring.

"As live oaks, these trees are limited by low winter temperatures, but they should survive anywhere from Auburn southward," Keever says. "But then again, someone sent me a picture of a 15-foot Toomer's seedling growing in Huntsville."

The late Thomas Dodd was a lifelong nurseryman at his family's nursery in Semmes and was a pioneer in the nursery industry. Keever was named the Thomas H. Dodd Endowed Professor in Horticulture in September.

## Beasley Endows Spirit of Excellence Scholarship in Agriculture

Terry Beasley, a former Auburn All-American football player and a College Football Hall of Fame inductee, has endowed the Number 88 Scholarship in the College of Agriculture through the Auburn Scholarship Campaign, an endowment that Beasley hopes will help Auburn students achieve their dreams by helping those less fortunate.

Beasley—who wore the "88" jersey from 1969 through '71 as a member of Auburn's football team—established the scholarship fund 12 years ago to recognize and encourage academically outstanding, highly motivated students who demonstrate financial need.

Beasley felt it important to give back to the university that cultivated his potential in a way that not only affects the lives of Auburn students, but possibly helps those living in poverty who can't afford to feed their families. His gift will be paired with a Spirit of Auburn Scholarship and will be awarded to students studying in the College of Agriculture, with a concentration related to food production and/or fisheries and allied aquacultures.

He hopes that scholarship recipients will work to help solve the food crisis in the U.S., especially in the Appalachian Mountains, where the need is great and resources are lacking.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must have an ACT score of 28 or comparable SAT score and a GPA of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale.

The Auburn Scholarship Campaign's goal is to provide Auburn's Spirit of Auburn and Academic Scholars students with additional funds and enhance Auburn's ability to attract quality students.



**HIGH EFFICIENCY**—College of Ag development officers Don Crow, left, and Mark Wilton display the Soaring with the Eagles Award trophies that Auburn University's Office of Development presented to them recently in recognition of their outstanding fundraising efforts in 2010. The award cites ag's development office as the Most Efficient Unit among all development offices for all other colleges, schools and other entities on campus. For every dollar donated to the College of Ag, Crow, Wilton and former ag development director Wes Cumbie spent just 9.1 cents, significantly less than the average among other development offices. This was the inaugural year for the Most Efficient Unit Award. Katie Hardy is development coordinator for the College of Ag.

## Where are they Now?

**David Cole**, a 2004 College of Agriculture landscape horticulture alum, has been named director of agricultural legislation for the Alabama Farmers Federation. In that role, Cole will work on behalf of Alabama farmers in the halls of the Alabama Statehouse in Montgomery. The Hale County native owned and operated a landscape design business before joining the Farmers Federation in 2006 as area organization director for Barbour, Bullock, Crenshaw, Macon, Pike and Russell counties.



Jill Clair

**Jill Clair** of Williamson, Ga., who graduated in May with her bachelor's degree in agricultural communications, is working this summer with the Alabama Farmers Federation as a public relations intern. Clair concentrated on print journalism during her time at Auburn. She worked for The Auburn Plainsman for two years, serving as news editor. She also contributed to Ag Illustrated and was a photographer for Auburn's yearbook, The Glomerata.

Salute

## In Reserve

### Ag Alum on Faculty Says Military Service Is Family Effort

by JAMIE CREAMER

This was supposed to be a story about veterinarian Soren Rodning, an alumnus of and assistant professor in Auburn's Department of Animal Sciences, and his experiences delivering medical care to the nation's military working dogs during his six-month deployment to Afghanistan as a member of the U.S. Army Reserve's 358th Medical Detachment Veterinary Services.

But along the way, it turned into a story of how one all-Auburn, all-in military-reserve family, surrounded by a multitude of supporters and aided by a two-foot-tall camouflage-clad cardboard character you'll meet shortly, bridged the 7,500 miles that stretch between Afghanistan and Alabama in a most upbeat kind of way.

And the story has a moral: The soldier who's deployed overseas isn't the only one making sacrifices.

"I came back with a new respect and appreciation for all military spouses and families, because they have a very tough job but get little recognition," Rodning says. "Military service is truly a family effort. Kim and I are proud our family had the opportunity to serve."

Kim, of course, is his wife—and, incidentally, his fellow College of Ag animal sciences alum, class of '98—and completing the family are daughters Ellie, 5, and 2-year-old Maren.

Rodning's enlistment in the Army Reserve three years ago was not a spur-of-the-moment kind of thing. It was a joint commitment the two made after spending a whole lot of time talking, soul-searching and praying.

"We both felt strongly that we wanted to serve our country in some way," Rodning says. "We knew going into this that it meant making some sacrifices, but we felt at peace with the decision."

It was in the spring of 2010 that Rodning learned he and fellow veterinarians and members of the Reserve's Tuskegee-based 358th Medical Detachment would be deployed to Afghanistan in August with the primary mission of caring for military working dogs, which, Rodning notes, are also known as "force multipliers" because of the lives they save as patrol dogs and explosives detectors.

Rodning's pre-deployment training started in May, and he says that's when Kim started "carrying the load" that, in addition to her job as a home-health occupational therapist (she changed fields!), included looking after the house, paying bills, maintaining vehicles and, especially, caring for the little ones 24/7, keeping routines as normal as possible and making certain daddy remained a big part of everyday life in the Rodning household.

And here's where that previously mentioned corrugated cutout, created by Rodning's younger brother in Mobile, comes in. His name was Flat Soren, aka Flat Daddy, which is exactly what he was: a miniature incarnation of Soren Rodning, Army Reservist and father. With Flat Soren's help, Kim made certain that daddy remained a big part of everyday life in the Rodning household. So from Rodning's departure to Afghanistan last August until his return in mid-March, wherever Kim and the two little Rodnings went, whither went Flat Soren. "Flat



**FLAT-OUT FAMILY**—At left, the Rodnings—from left, Maren, Ellie, Kim and Flat Soren, aka Flat Daddy—see how they measure up while on a family outing to the zoo during the Real Soren's deployment to Afghanistan. Above, Capt. Soren Rodning stands in his Army Reserve tent last December proudly displaying a pillowcase photograph his wife and daughters sent him for Christmas. The family stayed close despite the 7,500 miles that separated them. Rodning says he could not have served his country had it not been for the strong support of family and friends, of a boss and colleagues who picked up his "slack" at work and of an employer that appreciates military service.



Soren was at the table for every meal, he went to preschool, went shopping with them, went to a daddy-daughter dance," Rodning says. "He did it all."

Including coming in handy one day when Kim got pulled over for slightly exceeding the speed limit. The arresting officer walked up to the window, pen and citation pad in hand, and there, standing beside Kim in the front seat, was Flat Soren.

"The officer looked at Kim's license, looked at Flat Soren, then nodded, squeezed Kim's hand and told her to have a nice day," Rodning says.

From Afghanistan, Rodning communicated with his family every chance he got via phone calls, emails and, on rare occasions, Skype. But there were times—Ellie's fifth and Maren's second birthdays, his and Kim's 10th wedding anniversary, Christmas, Thanksgiving and even Auburn's national championship season—when it was especially tough being so far away.

Such times, though, made it all the more special when, on March 13, Rodning stepped off the Army bus he was riding and into the welcome center at Fort Benning, Ga., and Maren, ignoring requests for families to stay put at an imaginary line, tore loose from momma and flew to daddy.

"She was the first one to break out of the line," he says. "She jumped up in my arms. Talk about a great feeling."

Though Rodning says wife Kim is the real hero in this particular war story, she says that's a bit of a stretch.

"Soren is giving me way too much credit," she says. "It takes a special man to make his wife and children feel safe and loved from half a world away, and somehow, he managed to do it." ❧

## Auburn Advances to Finalist for Prestigious Employer Support Freedom Award

by JAMIE CREAMER



Soren Rodning and combat stress dog Apollo

Auburn University was one of 30 employers nationwide named by the U.S. Department of Defense as a finalist for the 2011 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest recognition the defense department gives to employers who serve in the U.S. Army National Guard and Reserve.

Auburn and the 29 other Freedom Award finalists—including such corporate giants as Ford Motor Company, CSX Transportation, Wells Fargo and 3M—were selected from a pool of 4,049 employers nationwide who were nominated for the

award by Guard and Reserve service members or their families for creating an outstanding supportive culture within their workplaces in support of employee soldiers.

Auburn, the only university among the 30 finalists, was nominated for the honor by Soren Rodning, an assistant professor and Alabama Cooperative Extension System specialist in the Department of Animal Sciences and a U.S. Army Reservist who was deployed to Afghanistan from August 2010 through mid-March.

"The support that Auburn, my department, the colleges of Ag and Veterinary Medicine and Extension gave me and my family throughout this whole thing was incredible," Rodning says. "Everybody went out of their way to get all the paperwork done, and while I was gone, I knew they were back here helping look after my family. I can't tell you how much stress that unloaded off me."

Though Auburn University was not one of the 15 finalists the defense department's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve agency announced May 31 as the 2011 recipients of the Freedom Award, an agency official said being selected as a finalist was "a tremendous achievement and honor that all of us should recognize and applaud."

Before Rodning's deployment last August, the employer support organization recognized U.S. military veteran and Auburn animal sciences department head Wayne Greene as a winner of its 2010 Patriot Award. Rodning nominated Greene for that award because of the professional and personal support and encouragement Greene has provided the reservist.



WINNING PHOTO—"Flyflower" by Julia Bartosh, research associate in animal sciences, was selected as one of the winning photographs in the Donald E. Davis Arboretum 2011 photo contest. To view more of the contest winners, visit the Donald E. Davis Arboretum website at [www.auburn.edu/cosam/arboretum](http://www.auburn.edu/cosam/arboretum).

College of Sciences and Mathematics  
**Arboretum Photo Contest Winners Announced**

The College of Sciences and Mathematics' Donald E. Davis Arboretum 2011 photo contest winners were announced on April 22. The contest, a collaborative effort between arboretum and the College of Liberal Art's Department of Art, featured nearly 100 entries that were judged in seven categories, including birds and mammals, Davis Arboretum, reptiles and amphibians, other wildlife, flora, artistic and people's choice.

All entries were on display in the Department of Art's Biggin Hall for more than a week with a ballot box in place for viewers to vote on an overall favorite photograph. This year's people's choice award was given to Jason McKinley for his photo titled "Orbit." Other contest winners were Nancy Loewenstein for "Smokey Day," Maellisa Godfrey for "Tree Skin," David Cline for "Tunnel Vision," Beverly Bank for "Magnolia: The Heart" and Julia Bartosh for "Flyflower." Some of the winners and contest entries will be featured in the 2012 arboretum calendar.

School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences  
**Graduate Students Recognized For Achievements**



OUTSTANDING STUDENTS—Several forestry and wildlife sciences graduate students were recently recognized for their achievements. Pictured sitting outside the SFWS building are, from left, Bin Zheng, Matthew Ricker and Janice Dyer; standing, Matthew Meyerpeter, Nick Martin and Peter Acker.

Several graduate students with Auburn's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences were recently recognized for their outstanding scholastic achievements. Bin Zheng was named Outstanding International Graduate Student for the school. She has been working to complete three graduate degrees—a master's in forestry, a Ph.D. in applied economics/forestry and a master's in statistics—while maintaining a 4.0 grade point average.

Two graduate students received the Drummond Company Fellowships and each received a \$2,000 award. Janice F. Dyer is pursuing a Ph.D. in forestry and was also named the SFWS Outstanding Ph.D. Student for the past academic year. In her current

position as a graduate teaching assistant, Dyer serves as the SFWS writing consultant to undergraduate and graduate students.

Nicholas Martin is the second recipient of the Drummond Company Fellowships. Martin is completing his master's in forestry and was also recently named one of Auburn's top 10 master's students.

Peter Acker received the George C. Moore Fellowship. Acker is pursuing his master's in wildlife sciences and received the award based on his excellent academic record.

The James Floyd Goggans Graduate Fellowship was presented to Matthew Ricker, a Ph.D. student in forestry. SFWS faculty said they chose Ricker for the award because of "the passion he shows for research and a determination to ensure his work is creative and outstanding in every detail."

Master's student Matthew Meyerpeter is the recipient of an award from the York International Scholars Program. Meyerpeter's project proposal, "Comprehensive analysis of the pathogenicity of ophiostoma," presented in Nicaragua last November, was selected as the top proposal submission. As a result, he will travel to conduct further research in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. This project will be performed in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, the Central American and Mexico Coniferous Resources Cooperative and Auburn University's Forest Health Dynamics Laboratory. It will support the Forest Health Protection's International mission of protecting the U. S. from exotic pests by identifying the origin of a new pest and its direction of migration.

College of Human Sciences  
**Historic Auburn House to Become Center for Philanthropic and Nonprofit Studies**



HISTORIC GIFT—An example of 19th- and 20th-century design, preservation and architecture, the Halliday-Cary-Pick House is the site for the newly developed Cary Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies at Auburn University.

The Halliday-Cary-Pick House, the second oldest home in Auburn, will be the site for the College of Human Sciences newly developed Cary Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies at Auburn University.

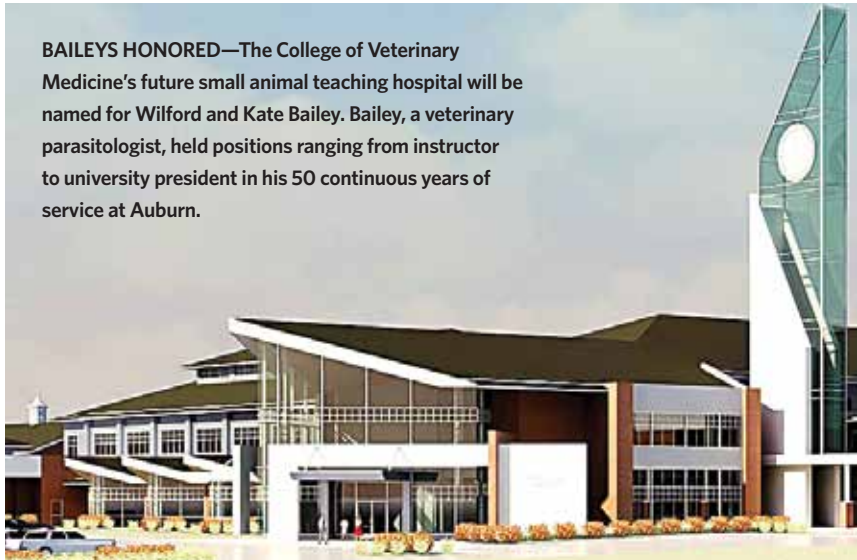
"This historic gift and subsequent creation of the Cary Center is a tremendous benefit for Auburn University and the Auburn community," says June Henton, dean of Auburn's College of Human Sciences.

Henton says the creation of the Cary Center is in tandem with the announcement of a new minor in philanthropy and nonprofit studies for undergraduate students at Auburn. This minor will be offered through the Department of Consumer Affairs in the College of Human Sciences. The Cary Center will serve as a nationally recognized venue to promote the curriculum.

The Cary Center will also offer a variety of programs centered on topics related to financial and philanthropic responsibility, and nonprofit leadership and mentoring and will integrate the Women's Philanthropy Board, which will relocate to the Cary Center, into its operations. Also in the center's plans are developing distance education courses and certificate and degree programs and conducting research.

The center was named in honor of Charles Allen Cary, the original owner of the home, for the leadership qualities he embodied as the first dean of Auburn's College of Veterinary Medicine. Plans are for the Cary Center to be open by July 1, with a formal dedication scheduled in the fall of 2011.

College of Veterinary Medicine  
**New Veterinary Teaching Hospital to be Named in Memory of Wilford and Kate Bailey**



BAILEYS HONORED—The College of Veterinary Medicine's future small animal teaching hospital will be named for Wilford and Kate Bailey. Bailey, a veterinary parasitologist, held positions ranging from instructor to university president in his 50 continuous years of service at Auburn.

The Board of Trustees of Auburn University has approved the naming of the future small animal teaching hospital for a former graduate of the College of Veterinary Medicine and his wife. The Wilford and Kate Bailey Small Animal Teaching Hospital will be built adjacent to the existing hospital on the college's campus.

Auburn alumni John and Rosemary Brown made a \$10 million pledge in memory of the Baileys. The Browns are contributing the funds in admiration and appreciation of their friendship with the Baileys which began when they were students at Auburn during the 1950s.

"Through their gift, John and Rosemary Brown are challenging friends and graduates of our college to match their pledge," says Dean Timothy Boosinger. "Their support creates awareness of the new small animal teaching hospital and encourages others to contribute."

Wilford S. Bailey, a veterinary parasitologist, held a 50-year continuous faculty appointment at Auburn University after receiving his veterinary degree in 1942. He served in positions ranging from instructor to university president.

Bailey was the first recipient of the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine's Distinguished Alumni Award. After his death in October 2000, the award was renamed the Wilford S. Bailey Distinguished Alumnus Award to acknowledge his contributions to veterinary medicine, higher education and humanity.

The Wilford and Kate Bailey Small Animal Teaching Hospital is scheduled to open in 2014. The new facility will feature approximately 200,000 square feet of clinical, examination and client-use space. The hospital will include services such as community practice, critical care, oncology, neurology, imaging and orthopedics.

**'Your Southern Garden' Now Airs Saturdays on APT**



SOUND ADVICE—Walter Reeves, host of "Your Southern Garden" on APT, is all about helping you be more successful in your landscape and garden.

Smith, an Extension horticulturist in Alabama, joins Reeves each week on the program, as do horticulture authorities from Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

Reeves is widely known in Georgia for his gardening expertise. He's in his 18th year hosting a Saturday morning lawn-and-garden radio call-in show on Atlanta's NewsTalk 750 WSB-AM and for a dozen years has written a weekly gardening column for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. On "Your Southern Garden," Reeves helps viewers plan weekend projects, prepare their landscapes for the growing season and learn timely tips from experts from four universities in the South.

"Land-grant universities are loaded with cutting-edge, yet practical, information that gardeners need," Reeves says. "Whether you are a beginner, a 'piddler' or a Master Gardener, there's something here for you."

Alabama Extension director Gaines Smith calls the new program a logical response to the growing demand for horticulture information in Alabama and the region.

"Our Extension offices receive more questions and requests related to gardening and landscaping than any of our other program areas," Smith says. "We are excited to be partnering with other Southern land-grant universities to bring citizens the best gardening information through this television program."

All Alabama gardeners, brown and green thumbs alike, can pick up great gardening tips and learn to truly enjoy their landscaping and gardening experiences by watching "Your Southern Garden" every Saturday at 3:30 p.m. central time on Alabama Public Television.

Wayne Reeves, a retired University of Georgia Cooperative Extension agent and lifelong gardening guru, hosts the entertaining educational program that the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and University of Florida/IFAS Extension, underwritten by Scotts Miracle-Gro, began co-producing in 2009.

For the 2011 season, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Clemson Cooperative Extension have signed on as "Your Southern Garden" co-sponsors. Kerry

**Outdoor Advertiser Helps 4-H Launch Billboard Campaign**

One of the nation's leading outdoor advertising companies is donating billboard space across the state to the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation Inc. to help promote the significant role that the nation's largest youth-development organization plays in preparing today's young people to become tomorrow's leaders.

The billboards, courtesy of LAMAR Advertising Co., feature two Cherokee County 4-H'ers—Taylor Parker, 13, a student at Sand Rock High School, and Shaliyah Glass, 12, who goes to Centre Middle School—and carry the message "4-H for the Future: Join. Volunteer. Give." The 4-H foundation is paying for the printing and posting of the billboards.



SPREADING THE WORD—Billboards featuring the smiling faces of Cherokee County 4-H'ers Taylor Parker, left, and Shaliyah Glass, and touting the significant role 4-H plays in positive youth development are springing up across Alabama. LAMAR Advertising has donated billboard space to help the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation promote the program.

"We want to remind Alabamians that 4-H is a strong youth-development organization with more than 78,000 members statewide," says Lamar Nichols, assistant director for 4-H and youth development with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. "4-H has something for every youth interest."

For Parker and Glass, who both say that seeing their faces plastered on billboards is "cool, but a little embarrassing," 4-H involvement comes naturally. Glass is the granddaughter of Linda Starr, a retired Alabama Cooperative Extension System county coordinator in north Alabama, and Parker is the daughter of Greg Parker, a former national 4-H winner who worked for a time at National 4-H headquarters, and wife Rita, a former Extension employee, and niece of current Cherokee County Extension coordinator Danny Miller.

Dorman Grace, chairman of the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation board of directors and a third-generation 4-H'er himself, says board members decided to promote the organization through billboards as a reminder to Alabamians of the importance of youth development.

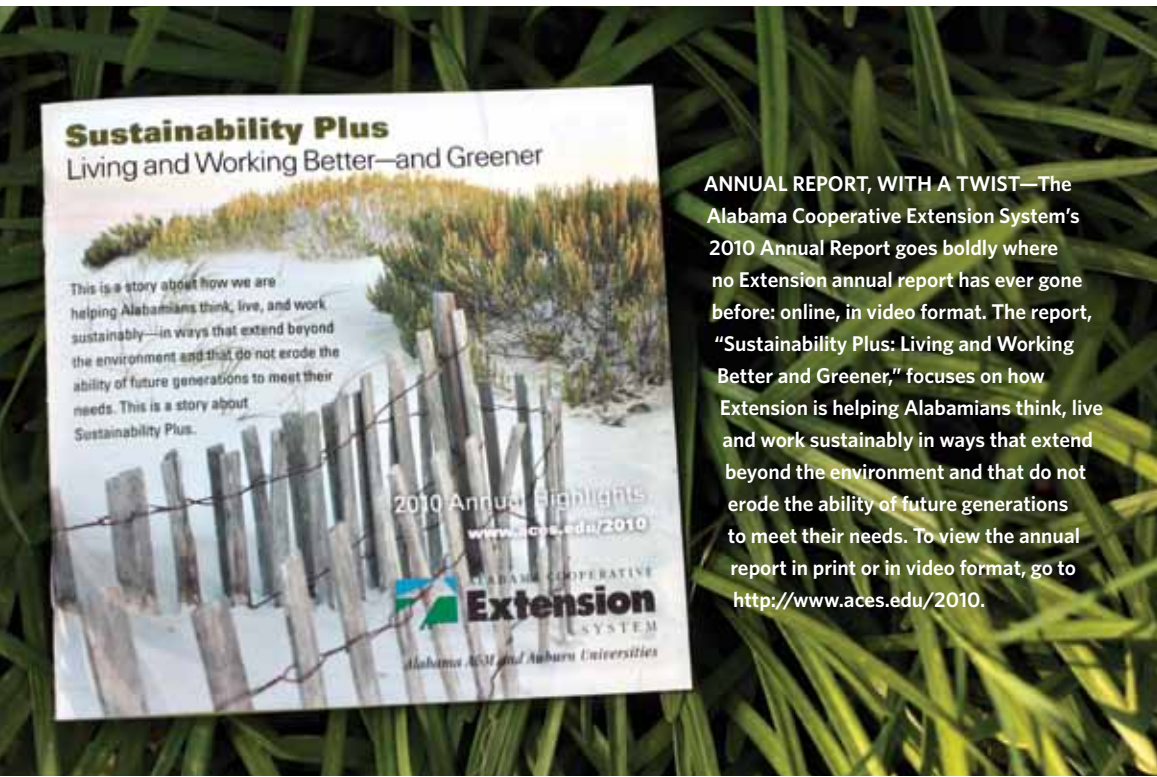
"4-H is the best youth program around," says Grace. "4-H is relevant in today's world, maybe even more than when I was an active 4-H'er because it provides educational, leadership and citizenship programs."

The estimated value of the billboard campaign is more than \$75,000.

The first 4-H billboard went up on I-85 near Montgomery. Future locations will vary, depending on billboard availability. The costs of printing and posting a billboard is \$175, and individuals, businesses, civic groups and other organizations are invited to support 4-H by sponsoring a billboard. For information on that, contact Nancy Alexander at 334-844-2219 or alexana@aces.edu, or go to [www.Alabama4H.com](http://www.Alabama4H.com) for a sponsorship form.



SALUTE TO HOME ECONOMISTS—These retired Alabama Extension home economics agents and specialists from years gone by were among those honored for their dedication and hard work through the decades during a recent 100 Years of Alabama Cooperative Extension Home Economics celebration in Montgomery. Almost 200 people from across the state attended the celebration luncheon, at which proclamations from Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley, Alabama congressmen Spencer Bachus and Jo Bonner and the Montgomery County Commission were read, all honoring the steadfast service of Extension home economists. Extension's home economics programs began in 1911, when part-time female agents from Pike and Walker counties enrolled 240 young ladies in what were called the girls' tomato clubs. Today, home demonstration agents, now called family and consumer sciences regional agents, continue to expand the Extension mission to meet the needs of Alabamians.



ANNUAL REPORT, WITH A TWIST—The Alabama Cooperative Extension System's 2010 Annual Report goes boldly where no Extension annual report has ever gone before: online, in video format. The report, "Sustainability Plus: Living and Working Better and Greener," focuses on how Extension is helping Alabamians think, live and work sustainably in ways that extend beyond the environment and that do not erode the ability of future generations to meet their needs. To view the annual report in print or in video format, go to <http://www.aces.edu/2010>.

# Calendar of Events

June • 2011

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

July • 2011

s	m	t	w	t	f	s
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August • 2011

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1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**Now through Aug. 25**  
**The Market at Ag Heritage Park**  
 Thursdays, 3-6 p.m.  
**Auburn**

The Market at Ag Heritage Park is a growers-only farmers market featuring fresh local produce, goat cheese, honey, stone-ground grains, plants, baked goods, educational exhibits, cooking and gardening demonstrations and much more. It is open to the entire community and is held each Thursday through Aug 25.

Contact: Laura Herring at 334-321-1603 or [herrilm@auburn.edu](mailto:herrilm@auburn.edu)



**FAMILY SHOPPING**—Shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables is truly a family affair at The Market at Ag Heritage Park each Thursday, 3 to 6 p.m., through August.

**July 4**  
**Independence Day Holiday**

**July 22**  
**Discover Your World: Auburn Edition**  
**Auburn**

During this event, high-school students choose among a variety of hands-on activities ranging from fisheries to the environment to veterinary medicine. Registration is \$30 and covers workshop materials, breakfast, lunch and a T-shirt. Students also learn about navigating the college selection process. Parents may also participate for a \$10 registration fee, which covers breakfast and lunch.

Contact: Deborah Solie at 334-844-8900 or [das0002@auburn.edu](mailto:das0002@auburn.edu); register at [www.ag.auburn.edu/goplaces/events](http://www.ag.auburn.edu/goplaces/events) and click on "Summer Program."

**Aug. 6**  
**Summer Graduation Breakfast**  
 9 a.m.

**Ham Wilson Arena - Auburn**

Summer 2010 College of Agriculture graduates and their families will be honored at this breakfast hosted by the AU Agricultural Alumni Association and sponsored by the Alabama Poultry & Egg Association.

Contact: Ann Gulatte at 334-844-2345 or [gulatam@auburn.edu](mailto:gulatam@auburn.edu)

**Aug. 6**  
**Home and Wildlife Expo**  
 12-5 p.m.

**Chilton Research and Extension Center - Clanton**

This event features programs and tours ranging from fruit production, fruit tasting, dessert tasting, farm pond management, wildlife control, field trial demonstrations, a petting zoo and cooking demonstrations.

Contact: Jim Pitts at 205-646-3610 or [pittsja@auburn.edu](mailto:pittsja@auburn.edu)

**Aug. 13**  
**Moving Day Picnic**  
 4:30-6 p.m.

**Comer Hall lawn - Auburn**

The Student Services Office and Parent Council co-sponsor a Moving Day Picnic for College of Agriculture incoming freshmen and their families. Volunteers are needed to help with the event, and students and families who want to attend should RSVP to the contact below.

Contact: Megan Ross at [mhr0001@auburn.edu](mailto:mhr0001@auburn.edu) or go to [www.ag.auburn.edu/students/future/parents/council.php](http://www.ag.auburn.edu/students/future/parents/council.php)

**Aug. 17**  
**Fall Semester Begins**

**Aug. 18**  
**Field Day**

**E.V. Smith Research Center - Shorter**

**Aug. 20**  
**Scholarship Recognition Program**  
 10 a.m.

**Ham Wilson Livestock Arena - Auburn**

This event recognizes all student recipients of College of Ag or related scholarships as well as the scholarship donors.

Contact: Ann Gulatte at 334-844-2345 or [gulatam@auburn.edu](mailto:gulatam@auburn.edu)

For more information on these and many other upcoming College of Ag and AAES events go to [www.ag.auburn.edu](http://www.ag.auburn.edu) and click on the "Calendar" button.

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# AG illustrated

*Recipe File*

## Pimento Cheese Perfection

### Wilton Wins Pimento Cheese Throwdown

A new tradition has begun in the College of Ag and AAES—a mostly friendly recipe competition. The first annual Pimento Cheese Throwdown was held in April and pitted eight contestants against one another to see who had the best pimento cheese recipe. The winner was Mark Wilton, the college's development officer, who earned the giant trophy using a recipe handed down from his great-grandmother, Josephine Duke, aka GrandMa Josie. The recipe has evolved through the years. The original recipe used homemade cheese and mayonnaise and the final product was stored in a crock and placed in a cool area. Wilton's grandmother, Catherine D. Wilton, has made this recipe for as long as the family can remember.



Mark Wilton

#### Grandma Wilton's Pimento Cheese

- 1/2 pound extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/2 pound extra-sharp white cheddar cheese
- 1 (7-ounce) jar diced pimentos
- Salt, pepper and cayenne pepper to taste
- 2/3 cup high-quality mayonnaise

Finely grate cheeses. Add pimentos and mix well. Add seasonings and mix well. Stir in mayonnaise. Chill for 24 hours. Serve with celery sticks or crackers.