

CORNELL UNIVERSITY STATION NEWS GENEVA NEW YORK

VOLUME LXXXI • NO. 12
MARCH 31-APRIL 7, 2000

BRIEFS

Warm Season Turfgrass Conference to be Held in Geneva, April 2-4

Pat Vittum, Michael Villani and the rest of Villani's capable crew will be hosting a conference titled "Turfgrass Entomology 2000 — Cool Season / Warm Season," April 2-4, in Geneva. The three days of workshops and discussions will be intermixed with social interaction, which is conducive to collaboration and exchange of information.

Meetings will be held at the Ramada Inn on Sunday afternoon, April 2, and move to Jordan Hall on April 3 and 4. Topics to be covered include biocontrol, IPM from research through implementation, university/industry/government/professional relationships, black cutworm management, pheromones and other semiochemicals, environmental issues and other topics important to turfgrass managers.

The gathering, which will be attended by more than 60 participants, will also include tours to various local wineries and attractions.

"Turfgrass•Entomology•2000" will also provide an opportunity to announce the release of the second edition of Dr. Haruo Tashiro's classic book, *Turfgrass Insects of the United States and Canada*. This edition was authored by Vittum and Villani along with Tashiro and will be available at a special price for conference participants.

On Sunday evening there will be a special dinner for workshop attendees and friends of Dr. Tashiro at Geneva Country Club. The event will honor Tashiro's 50 years of experience as "dean of American turfgrass entomologists" and celebrate publication of the second edition of the turf book. Ted Horton, superintendent of the Pebble Beach Golf Course in Monterey, will speak.

Monday's dinner will include a South Africa travelogue by Rick Brandenburg, of North Carolina State University.

(Continued on page 2)

Gary Howard Remembered

We are only here for a spell — get all the laughs you can.

Will Rogers

Gary Howard died on Friday, March 24, after an extended illness. He was born on April 4, 1929, and grew up on an apple farm on the Niagara frontier where his family had lived for many generations. Gary graduated from Cornell in 1951 with a B.S. in agriculture and a focus in pomology. He was a veteran of the Korean War and worked in many areas of agriculture before coming to the Experiment Station in 1968, where, according to Bob Pool, "he found his real home."

"Gary loved nature, the outdoors, and hands-on work," Pool went on to say. "He loved to teach and he loved to preach. He was a great mentor to the graduate students in the grape research program. He was an institution at the grape grower meetings where his enthusiasm and raconteurial skills allowed him to educate while entertaining. His ability to communicate with humor made him the most demanded toastmaster in the grape industry and at the Experiment Station."

"Most of all Gary loved understanding his vines and learning ways to help our growers produce better grapes and wine. Of the many things I appreciated about Gary, his dedication and honesty were the most important. He taught me much about grape growing, and he taught me about friendship. He was an inspiration to many, but was indispensable to the success of Cornell's effort to improve New York wine quality," said Pool.

Steve Lerch, who knew Gary for 23 years, remembers him as the quintessential giver of advice. "He was always ready to give you his opinion, on a wide range of topics—even when you didn't want it," said Steve. "He reveled in starting discussions on controversial subjects, and insisted that the participants stayed on topic. He supported their positions, and attacked 'faulty logic' with a passion. He was a master at drawing out peoples' opinions, and somehow was always able to prevent these discussions from becoming polarized, and devolving into arguments. He had such an open, disarming style that you just couldn't stay upset with him for long, even when you violently disagreed with his position. You just somehow knew that he was assailing your opinion, or your logic, not *you* personally. He never had an 'I told you so' attitude (although you might hear him say 'What'd I tell ya?'), and I can believe that he didn't even remember the outcome of a lot of them. I think that what was important to him was the dialog itself, the airing of ideas and opinions. He thoroughly thought through, and researched (*Consumer Reports* was a favorite) all of his 'pet' topics, and I think that he just wanted to make sure that you at least tried to do the same."

"I learned a lot from Gary, and have tried to model myself after him in many ways. For the past five years, I've taken some pride in being referred to as 'the new Gary Howard'. That title has now taken on a deeper meaning for me. I'll do my best."

(Continued on page 2)



Gary Howard with "his vines."

(BRIEFS, continued)

Competing With the King

Stephen King has nothing over John Zakour—"well, only \$450,000 in sales," according to Zakour.

Up until King's 60-page short story, *Riding the Bullet*, went live last week, Zakour's *Plutonium Blonde* was the number one best-selling e-book for Peanut Press, one of the leading e-book publishers in the U.S.

"Stephen King was so jealous of my success, he had to horn in, then outsold me by 150,000 copies. Rats!" commented the Station's webmeister.

King will never be able to match the plot, however. The last private detective on earth searches for an android who happens to be a copy of the richest woman on earth—and an ex-exotic dancer. The story originally appeared as an interactive serial novel for the Sci-Fi Channel's website.

You can access www.peanutpress.com and buy the Palm Pilot version of *Plutonium Blonde* for only \$4.95. A rocket-reader version is coming from Treeless Press in April. A pdf version is available from softlot.com

Zakour's goal is to sell 5,000 copies. "That's the same number of copies that *Forest Gump* sold as a paperback **before** the movie," he adds. So far, the novel has sold 500 copies. At 5000 copies, Zakour expects the movie deals to start rolling in. Then, the Station will have some serious competition for its intrepid webmeister who has been heard to say: "Virtual is the name of the game."

Good luck, John.

Your Safety Attitude Probably Dates Back to Your Childhood

Most of us were taught to look both ways before crossing streets and not to play with matches. As adults, we are warned not to smoke, not to stay in the sun too long, and not to drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Yet, as common as these safety rules may be, many of us still forget or ignore them from time to time.

At work, some people neglect safety rules because they:

- are in a hurry
- figure accidents always happen to others
- are tired, careless, complacent or ignorant

Every time employees are aware of safety rules and break them anyway, we say they have unsafe attitudes. Picture a technician who neglects to wear eye protection while working with harmful liquids that could splash in the face. Think about a warehouse worker who knows that an object weighs too much to be lifted by one person, but still attempts to lift it without any help. These employees are demonstrating unsafe attitudes.

The next time you are about to break a safety rule, stop and think about what could happen to you, your co-workers, or your family. Imagine the pain, inconvenience, and lost time and money that could result. Then do the job correctly, the safe way.

Safe Attitude Checklist

Always:

- Report all accidents to your supervisor, even though they may seem minor at the time.
- Look for a cause of all accidents or near misses to help prevent them in the future.
- Practice good housekeeping to prevent slips and falls—your own or anyone else's.
- Clean up spills and keep all areas free of clutter.
- Know which types of fire extinguishers may be used safely for each class of fire.
- Use good body mechanics when lifting and moving objects.
- Get help when you need it, and let your legs—not your back—do the work.
- Use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you've been assigned—every time.
- Take precautions before using electrical equipment. Make sure it's in good condition.
- Remember to share your own safe attitudes and habits with co-workers.

Never:

- Never ignore or neglect safety rules.
- Never get complacent about your work.
- Never assume accidents only happen to others.
- Never drive or operate machinery under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Never take chances with the life and health of yourself or your co-workers.

Geneva EH&S Program

(HOWARD, continued from page 1)

Martin Goffinet paid tribute to Gary at the March 29 Memorial Service, and provided some perspectives on Gary's activities—his work for a quarter century as a viticulture specialist, and his lifetime passion for hunting and fishing. Gary came to the Station in 1968 to work with Nelson Shaulis as an experimentalist, replacing Herman Amberg, who left to work at his own business. At the time, Gary had served as the contractor for PepsiCo's subsidiary, Empire State Sugar Co., and was well versed in sugar beet production and processing.

Gary was new to grapes at that time. When John Cain wrote to Nelson, who was on sabbatical in Australia, about Gary's interest in the grape position, he thought Gary seemed like a nice guy, but didn't have much experience with grapes. "Probably could learn," wrote Cain.

By all accounts, Gary did learn and was soon trained in all aspects of viticultural research: pruning and training, weed control, rootstock evaluation, evaluation of vinifera grape varieties, and maintaining research trials across the state, from Long Island to Fredonia. About the time Nelson retired in 1978, Gary was promoted from Experimentalist to Research Support Specialist and soon moved into Bob Pool's viticulture program, at which time his duties were expanded to include giving presentations to a host of audiences.

Gary spoke at grape meetings for two reasons: One, he had a firm grasp of the topics, and two, he had the world's best delivery and presentation style. For years following his retirement in 1992, surveys taken after extension meetings inevitably contained the plea, 'Put Gary Howard on the program!'

Gary's job application stated his hobbies as golf, hunting, fishing, camping and conservation. He was very active in Ducks Unlimited,

(Continued on page 3)

When the Nose Doesn't Know: Cornell Scientists Develop Standard Spectrum of Smell to Separate 'Ahhh' from 'Ugghh'

Distinguishing the difference between the aroma of pepperoni pizza and boiling cabbage is not as simple as it seems for everyone. Some people have a heightened sense of smell and can be overwhelmed by aromas. And some suffer from smell blindness, a condition appropriately called "anosmia," that could make the cabbage smell like a four-star restaurant.

But, who is who? In the commercial world, how do you distinguish between those with perfect sniff pitch and those with none? Cornell University food chemists are finding out by standardizing the spectrum of smell.

Jane Friedrich, Cornell doctoral candidate in food chemistry, is developing sniff standards in the laboratory of Terry Acree, a Cornell professor of food science, at the university's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. "Let's say you smell an essence oil like jasmine, which is a pure smell. Your ability to smell that jasmine is based on a small combination of olfactory receptor proteins. Those proteins produce a pattern your brain would recognize," she says. But even for finite aromas like jasmine, people smell it in different ways.

Friedrich presented her research into smells, "Selecting Standards for Gas Chromatography Olfactometry," at the American Chemical Society national meeting Sunday (March 26) at the Moscone Center, San Francisco.

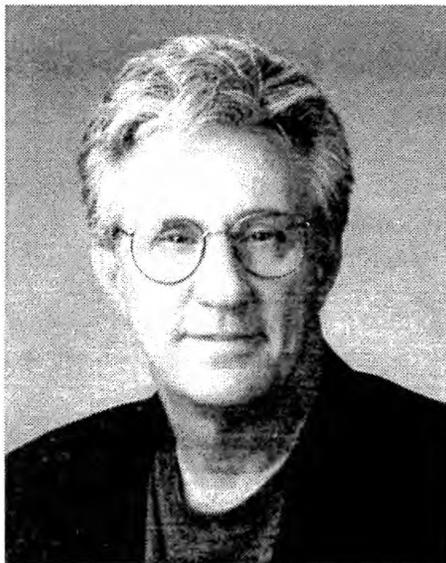
One reason for the large variation associated with olfactory acuity is due to a phenomenon called "specific anosmia," said Friedrich. Simply, this is smell blindness, or insensitivity to the odor of a chemical or group of chemicals in people with otherwise normal olfactory sensitivity. Specific anosmia poses a challenge to researchers because it can distort data in sensory research labs.

Friedrich noted a classic example of this sensory-test problem from a study performed at the Western Regional Research Laboratory in Albany, Calif., more than 30 years ago. Test subjects sniffed isobutyric acid, which smells like dirty socks or an unclean goat to most people. *But there were two testers who sensed the isobutyric acid had a "very pleasant fruity odor—like apples."* Experiments later revealed that the wayward individuals had a specific anosmia to isobutyric acid, and the fruity smell they detected were the byproducts and impurities usually found in commercial samples of the acid.

"If a company wants to make pine cleaner for bathrooms and inadvertently uses a person on the smell panel with an anosmic sense of smell, that person may barely perceive the alpha pinen (the active chemical responsible for the smell). This means that the rest of the consumers will think it smells too piney," said Friedrich. "That's a problem."

Using a selective and sensitive bioassay for smells based on gas chromatography olfactometry, called CharmAnalysis™, Friedrich and Acree have investigated the compounds responsible for specific anosmia. The researchers now are attempting to correlate sensi-

(Continued in next column)



Terry Acree



Jane Friedrich

Friedrich used standard tests to sort out her original testing subjects. She screened 10 people, with each testing period taking about 3 weeks, or 30 weeks of testing in total. Friedrich and Acree believe that they can now accurately place people in three categories: hyperosmic (very sensitive), hyposmic (the baseline category) and anosmic. "This will help other researchers conduct analyses," said Friedrich. "Our goal eventually is to get the testing down to three sniffs."

B. Friedlander

(HOWARD, continued from page 2)

serving as a Committeeman, and donating much time, talent and cash to that organization. He was also interested in grouse and pheasant habitat improvement

Waterfowl hunting was Gary's particular passion—a pursuit he no doubt learned very early, growing up on the edge of the Niagara River. His father, a fruit farmer in Youngstown, NY, was an avid waterfowler and did some outdoors writing. Perhaps this combination helped mold Gary's art for telling the good story. Certainly Gary perfected the mix of fact, technical expertise, and the right amount of "blarney." The results were usually manifested as anecdotes, tall tales, and Gary's inimitable "points of view," often delivered

(Continued on page 4)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEMINARS

HORT SCIENCE

Date: Monday, April 3, 2000
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Place: Food Science Conference Room
Title: "The Ethylene Response in Plants: How Does It Work and How Can We Change It?"
Speaker: Dr. Harry Klee, Department of Horticultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville

PLANT PATH

Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2000
Time: 3:30 p.m.
Place: A133, Barton Lab
Title: "100 Years of Rust"
Speaker: Professor Richard Staples, Boyce Thompson Institute, Cornell University, Ithaca

SPECIAL SEMINAR

Date: Thursday, April 6, 2000
Time: 4 p.m.
Place: 404 Plant Science Building Ithaca Campus
Title: "Applications of Tissue Culture and Gene Transfer Techniques to the Improvement of Fruit Crops," Sponsored by The Society for Edible Horticulture. Contact Laurie Boyden at leb17@cornell.edu for more information.
Speaker: Dr. Freddi Hammerschlag, Cornell University, Ithaca

LTC

Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2000
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Title: MAC Basics
Place: Jordan Hall
Instructor: John Barnard

Date: Thursday, April 6, 2000
Time: 9 a.m.- Noon
Title: Excel Basics
Place: Jordan Hall
Instructor: Cheryl TenEyck

Open Lab, 7 a.m.-1 p.m. The Library Technology Center will be open for anyone needing help with specific software solutions or anyone that would like to come in and work
(Continued in next column)

(LTC, continued)
 on FLEX tutorials. Jane Irwin - Facilitator.
 Go to <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/library/cal.html> if you would like to see workshop descriptions and/or a complete listing of all workshops available.

Jane Irwin

FITNESS

AEROBICS AT THE SAWDUST CAFE

Date: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Time: 12:10 - 1 p.m.

TAEKARDIO

Date: April 4, 2000
Time: Noon
Place: Jordan Hall Auditorium

CLASSIFIED

FOR SALE: 1989 Ford Escort LX, 4 door hatchback, 5 speed, one owner, 168k miles, some rust. Maintenance records available, runs well. \$1100. Contact Mary Beth at: mes33@cornell.edu

FOR SALE: Refrigerator and electric range and electric dryer. All in excellent condition. Call Nancy at x2313 or 789-5485.

FOR RENT: Self-contained 1 bedroom apartment. 20 minute walk or 5 minute drive to Station. Call 789-1837.

FOR SALE: Two new Good Year tires on new rims, size P185/75R14 with mud and snow tread for \$95. Call Bob Kime at x2258 or rwk1@cornell.edu.

WANTED TO RENT: An apartment or a room in a house (with access to kitchen facilities) for a Postdoc arriving in Geneva in April. Needed for April and May only. Any leads would be very much appreciated. Contact Greg English-Loeb at x2345 or e-mail gme1.

WANTED TO RENT: Post-Doc and PhD Student need a house to rent near the Station. Dawn and Torey will be moving here in July and anticipate living in Geneva or the surrounding area for 2 or 3 years. They have 2 large dogs and are looking for a nice, quiet home to rent. If you have any ideas please call 607-539-3293.

FOR SALE: 2 bicycles- # 1 Huffy, 3-speed (Shimano), 15 years old, good condition, \$10. # 2 Takara, 10-speed, 10 years old, excellent condition. \$50. Contact Mary Beth at x2618 or mes33.

FOR SALE: Scuba equipment: oceanic ocean sport BC, size: M, near mint, black with blue trim, comes with blue carry bag. \$300, or best offer. Contact Mike Fordon at x2214 or mpf8.

FOR SALE: '90 Subaru Legacy, 4 doors, 105K miles, totally automatic, air cond., cassette player, radio AM-FM. Absolutely no rust. Running in excellent condition. Book price: \$ 2,920. Asking: \$ 2,490. (negotiable). Need to sell! Call Onofre at x2433 or ob18.

(HOWARD, continued from page 3)
 to a slack-jawed audience.

Many enjoyed listening to Gary's sporting escapades, but Martin Goffinet enjoyed being *in them* more.

"Fishing expeditions generally began after dawn, but duck hunting often meant leaving his house at 4 a.m., driving an hour, and then launching a boat in the pitch black in some windswept marsh or bay," said Martin. "After the decoys are spread, the boat camouflaged, the dog attended to, the coffee gets poured. The wait is on, anticipation is high, and I am not disappointed, for Gary is about to begin our morning's conversation in earnest.

"And what do we talk about? Why, you, of course, and a whole host of people, places, things too numerous to mention. You peopled Gary's world and he recorded these interactions with you in the most outlandish yet affectionate stories imaginable. I was always impressed that Gary did not spare himself in those stories and he often put a humorous twist on his own ineptitude and misfortunes. I thank him for those insights into you, into himself, and into me. He was actually quite a good psychologist, you might say a one-man Employee Assistance Program. He certainly helped me decipher what is and is not important at work and in my personal life, and he did it with humor and a good heart."

Martin went on to say that "we have all been cast as players in Gary's stories and our 'comedy of errors' performed to critical acclaim. He was a Charles Schultz to us Peanuts characters. Our stories and memories of Gary are as intertwined as his stories intertwine us. Our stories now go on, and Gary's memory goes with them."

Martin closed his eulogy at the service with this one picture. "Gary is approaching St. Peter in his camouflage coat, Jones hat, and Bean's khaki pants. St. Peter says, 'Gary E. Howard, come forward and tell me a little bit about yourself.' Gary's face pans toward us and a broad knowing grin appears on his face. St. Pete is about to get an earful!"

Gary is survived by his wife, Nancy Smith of North Rose; two children, Susan who lives in Long Island and Mitchell in Rochester; one sister, Judy (Ben) Moss of Medina; nieces and nephews - and his buddy and hunting companion, Max, his dog.

Joe Ogrodnick, with thanks to Martin Goffinet, Bob Pool and Steve Lerch