Finally!

By Melissa Klein

After 15 years of planning, the Dairy Learning Center is complete. A special ribbon-cutting ceremony was held October 12th at the Mann Valley Laboratory Farm to celebrate the event.

The new Dairy Learning Center replaces the existing dairy facility that had been operating on the Campus Lab Farm since 1957. The new Dairy Learning Center offers even greater educational opportunities to UWRF students as well as individuals in the agricultural industries. As a living laboratory, it contains all elements needed to run a commercial dairy operation, plus technology enhanced classrooms and other educational facilities.

Dean Gallenberg described the center as “emblematic” and is illustrative of where the university has been, where it is today and what the center will mean for the future. It also shows the continued commitment to the students and agriculture, he said.

Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board representative Matt Joyce said the dairy industry in Wisconsin contributes $20.6 billion every year to economic activity. “Wisconsin is fortunate to celebrate a project like this and to witness the strong commitment UWRF has to enhance education,” he said. “With educational opportunities such as this, we will continue to remain America’s Dairyland.”

Many students were present at the ceremony to see their new facilities. Drew Johnson, a senior from Cashton, Wis., explained to the audience that the Dairy Learning Center will add to the opportunities UWRF offers to students. This also prepares students to be a part of the next generation of the dairy industry.

On October 25th the cows were moved into the new facility. The staff, student workers and the cows encountered some challenges adapting to their new environment, but overall it has gone well. The staff had anticipated there might be a serious decline in milk production during the transition, fortunately that never materialized.

The Dairy Learning Center utilizes an environmentally friendly composted bedding housing system designed to provide a comfortable environment for the cows. After removal from the cattle barns, the bedding material will be placed into windrows and the composting process will continue. The final compost product will be available for purchase by the public for use in gardens and landscaping, and the farm will also apply the compost as fertilizer on the fields. The facility features other sustainable practices, including systems to minimize wastewater in which water to cool the milk will be reused for the livestock, and equipment wash water will be reused to wash floors and in some cases for irrigation.

Farm Director, Bill Connolly has noticed several positive effects of the new facility. There is increased interest on the part of the public to visit the Mann Valley Farm. The Farm has a different look and feel - all positive. Connolly also noted how the Campus Farm has changed for the better. The equine operation has expanded into some of the old dairy facilities and there is a new sense of openness and flexibility to the operation. Plans are in the works for renovation and new construction on the Campus Farm that will better accommodate the equine program into the future.
Greetings from the CAFES Dean’s Office! The past 8 months have been an exciting and busy time for the College with lots of activity, lots of challenges, and lots of opportunity. The opening of the Dairy Learning Center and move of the dairy herd from the Campus Lab Farm along with the completion of the Mann Valley Farm land swap highlighted some major changes in facilities. Long-time faculty members Bob Baker and Tony Jilek retired and will certainly be missed. New faculty included Holly Dolliver and Tonya Amen in the fall with David Kuehl scheduled to start this spring. Searches are underway in Agricultural Engineering Technology and Animal and Food Science. Karen Olson joined the Dean’s Office as the new program associate. Funding from a USDA Challenge Grant is assisting development of curriculum in sustainable agriculture. These are just a few examples of what’s been going on.

In the weeks ahead you’ll be contacted by the UWRF Foundation as part of the annual Fund for Excellence phonathon. Let me thank you for your participation in this effort in the past. Last year (2007) CAFES once again led the four colleges at UWRF in proportion of alumni giving to this program as well as in total dollars raised. CAFES alumni are strong supporters of their alma mater. Your generosity makes it possible for us to add to our scholarship support for students as well as fund various activities and projects throughout the college. I know 2008 will be another great year of support by our alumni.

This FencePost newsletter is one such activity supported by the Fund for Excellence funds. As I mentioned in a previous issue, we’d like to move toward an electronic version of the FencePost at least once annually along with implementing more frequent dissemination of news and other information to CAFES alumni. To accomplish this we’ll need a much greater database of alumni e-mail addresses – if we don’t have yours please provide that to us. The UWRF Alumni Relations website has a link for you to provide that quickly and easily or you can update your record when the students call on behalf of the Fund for Excellence. In the meantime we’ll still publish and send hard copies and will continue to do so for the fall issue even after we implement things electronically. The basic content of the FencePost will remain largely the same although we’re trying some new things with the types of articles and information and its organization. Students will still be involved in writing articles and gaining experience assisting with the publication.

Also regarding the Fund for Excellence, another decision we made this past year was to set aside a portion of the funds to assist in a building or renovation project each year. While the dollars available will be limited it’s hoped that they will be used as a match for funding from other sources. The building of a second hoop house for the swine operation at the Mann Valley Farm was the project chosen this year. The majority of funds are coming from the Pig-to-Plate project and the Lab Farm budget. This is an excellent example of collaborative funding and stretching our capabilities.

As this year unfolds, so to will the UWRF Foundation’s Capital Campaign. Funding priorities for the university and each of the colleges have been developed. In CAFES this was done through each of the departments and represents a list of needs we hope to address through the campaign and by other means. I hope you’ll familiarize yourself with the campaign and consider becoming involved.

In closing, I want to thank you for taking the time not only to read this issue of the FencePost but for your continued interest in and commitment to CAFES and UWRF. We will continue to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities in front of us because of that. Here’s to a great 2008 for each of you!

Dale Galenberg

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**Into the Biofuels World**

Solving real-world problems using existing technology is what engineering technology is all about. That is how Dean Olson, Professor of Agricultural Engineering Technology summarizes the purpose of the biodiesel project he and his students have undertaken. With funding from a UWRF Foundation Grant, Dean Olson and his colleague Kamal Adam are purchasing a small-scale biodiesel processor, storage tanks and test equipment to produce high quality biodiesel from waste vegetable oil. The waste vegetable oil (WVO) will come from the campus food service, the biodiesel produced from that waste oil will be used to operate the tractors on the laboratory farm.

Although the processor has not yet arrived, the students have been busy this past fall preparing for its arrival. They were determining the sizes of the pumps and collection vessels that will be needed, investigating the pretreatment that will have to be done on the waste oil, gaining an understanding of the safety and regulatory concerns, and the quality control measures that will have to be in place to ensure the final product is safe to use in the farm equipment.

This is a large project with many small projects embedded within it which allows students to tackle the problems that most interest them. However, one of the goals Olson has is to try to get the students to visualize the big picture, that is how one decision impacts another and how this all translates into the industrial environment.

One of the additional factors students are determining is how best to staff and manage the operation. Once the processor is up and running, Olson compares it to doing the laundry. There is a lot of time and work involved but it happens intermittently, with someone needing to attend to the production process now and then.

After all the logistical and technical details have been worked out and the processor is up and running smoothly, there will continue to be opportunities for student learning and involvement. Future students can adjust the parameters of the process to try to improve the quality of the biodiesel, compare the fuel produced from waste vegetable oil to that produced from pressing soybeans and/or sunflowers, or they might develop new uses for the by-products of the process.
Falcon Foods Product Blends Cheese and Wine

By Melissa Klein

For some people, cheese and wine go together like milk and cookies. University of Wisconsin-River Falls students, faculty and staff took this tried-and-true combination to a new level to create a new cheese called Cobblestone Red, which is now offered at Falcon Foods on campus.

This Wisconsin original was created combining a creamy semi-soft cheese with the fruits of a local winery and vineyard -- Chateau St. Croix near St. Croix Falls, Wis. The cheese uses the vineyard’s Chateau Rouge wine, which is a specialty blend of red Zinfandel and Muscat that creates a rich, full bodied sweet burgundy colored wine and carries the flavors of fresh berries, black cherries and vanilla. It enhances the aesthetic, flavor and texture of the University’s white Cheddar curd artisan cheese, says Ranee May, Falcon Foods plant manager and UWRF instructor.

May came up with the idea about two years ago, and through her experiential learning class she put the plan into motion. “I was just thinking about the idea and it snowballed from there,” said May.

The slogan on the cheese is “Made by students with student pride.” UWRF students determined what equipment was necessary for the production, and the dairy plant employs students who produce the cheese. “When students take pride in what they are doing, you receive a better quality product,” said May. “The students have ownership in Cobblestone Red.”

Typically through their coursework, UWRF students learn to make the more common Wisconsin cheese varieties. Recently Gov. Jim Doyle announced that in 2006 Wisconsin Cheese produced 2.5 million pounds of cheese, which sets a national record. This growth in production is credited to the demand for “high-quality and specialty cheeses.” These artisan cheeses accounted for 45 percent of the national specialty cheese market and increased in Wisconsin by 26 million pounds.

To address this changing U.S. cheese market and stay on top, Falcon Foods formed a partnership with Chateau St. Croix, a relatively new winery in the St. Croix Valley, to inspire the UWRF students to create and market additional artisan cheeses that incorporate or pair with the wines that are locally made.

The students and Falcon Foods also worked with the Dairy Business Innovation Center, a Madison-based nonprofit organization dedicated to growing specialty and artisan dairy businesses, to determine marketing strategies.

Many surveys and tests were performed. Laura Wojchik, a marketing communications major with an agricultural emphasis from Amery, helped with the marketing aspect of the new product. “This has been a great opportunity for students and awareness of the product will continue to grow,” said Wojchik.

Steve Johnson, a food science major from Dorchester, works in the dairy plant and makes Cobblestone Red. “It is a unique cheese that is not normally found in a grocery store,” said Johnson. “It is a nice change of pace and is locally produced.”

Cobblestone Red premiered at the World Dairy Expo and was the talk of the trade center. It was also served at the recent UW System Board of Regents meeting on campus and the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the new UWRF Dairy Learning Center. The feedback was positive, said May.

A press release was created through Public Affairs promoting Cobblestone Red. The Saint Paul Pioneer Press caught wind of the new product and traveled to River Falls to see the cheese making process and had a feature story in the Sunday edition. Since the release, there has been a strong reaction. May explained that people are placing orders on the web or traveling to Falcon Foods to purchase the cheese in person. Some people have traveled to River Falls from Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

“The release has been good for all of our sales, not just the cheese,” said May. “People are purchasing our other products as well.”

Cobblestone Red can be purchased in the Falcon Food store on the UWRF campus. May says Falcon Foods plans to work with distributors to get the cheese into local stores. It will also be available at the Chateau St. Croix Winery and Vineyard. To learn more about this and other items produced in the dairy plant visit www.uwrf.edu/food-science/.
CAFES Welcomes Two New Faculty

By: Jessica Wead-Bergan

A love of agriculture has always been a part of Dr. Tonya Amen’s life. Hired in August to teach animal breeding, biometrics, and genetics, Amen is looking forward to her future as a professor and researcher at UW-River Falls. She grew up on a farm in Colorado surrounded by many ranches and has always had a special interest in beef cattle, although her dad and brother were fond of the equine industry. Following graduation from high school, she first attended Northeastern Junior College in Colorado before heading off to Texas Tech. to get a bachelor’s degree in animal science. After that she went to Texas A&M for her Masters degree and PhD in animal breeding. Amen feels that her interest in the fields, combined with her education and experience have prepared her well for the courses she is teaching and she feels at home here at UW-River Falls. The only part of the job she does not care for is grading papers. A common complaint of many faculty!

Amen chose UW-River Falls because it allows her to focus all of her attention on teaching during the academic year and gives her time to concentrate on research during the summer. She has set many goals for the future, both short term and long term. One of her short term goals is to enjoy some Falcon Foods mint chocolate chip ice cream - her favorite flavor. Overall, Amen has had a pleasant experience so far and is pleased about working in such a wonderful environment like UW-River Falls.

From exploring in her backyard when she was young, to teaching students about the environment, Dr. Holly Dolliver has always loved the outdoors. Dolliver joined the plant and earth science department in August and taught introduction to geology during the fall. She is motivated in her teaching and research by her belief that the environment is very important to everyone and she wants to find more ways that we, as humans can improve it. Prior to coming to UW-River Falls Dolliver spent six years studying the presence of agriculturally-derived antibiotics in the environment, and how these emerging contaminants are making their way into our water systems.

Dolliver received her bachelor’s degree at North Dakota State University where she majored in soil science with a minor in geology. Her master’s degree and PhD came from the University of Minnesota in water resource science. Along the way she held various jobs including, a soil science position with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and a short stint as an environmental consultant.

When asked why she chose UW-River Falls, Dolliver replied, “I really like River Falls because it is so student focused, even the mission statement revolves around the students.” Dolliver appreciates the size of the community and also the fact that she gets to work in a department with a multidisciplinary approach. She commented that her colleagues are excellent and that she enjoys working with them, but the most rewarding part of her job is working with students who are willing to work hard and have a positive attitude towards the class.

Physiology Goes Digital

By: Ashley Gerdts

Students taking physiology this fall had a new experience. The project began about a year ago with a remodeling of the physiology laboratory in the Agricultural Science Building. The old lab benches were removed and replaced with new tables and chairs, a new instructor workstation was installed, along with new computers for students, and a digital projector and screen.

In November, the second phase of the lab modernization project was completed. New digital data acquisition equipment was incorporated into the physiology lab. “This equipment will greatly enhance the capability of the students for meaningful hands-on exercises,” according to Dr. Gary Onan, professor of animal science. The equipment is capable of generating electrocardiograms and other cardiovascular data, measuring lung function through spirometric testing, and investigating neuromuscular physiology. “The combination of new equipment and new computers creates a really powerful analysis capability. We also have the ability to save the data for future references.”

Often the old equipment didn’t work well and students would gather incorrect information. Now students can fully understand what they are doing by generating accurate data and producing good information. According to Dr. Onan, students have had many positive comments about the new lab equipment and are enjoying the experience.

Because the new equipment arrived late in the semester, fall classes made only limited use of it. The three sections of animal physiology and the reproductive physiology class will make full use of the new facilities and equipment this spring.

Funding for this project came from the UWRF lab modernization fund. Each year a certain amount of money is allocated for facility and program improvements. Program areas apply for these funds through a competitive process. Onan applied for five years before being awarded the funds for this project.
Why UWRF?

By Katie Mack

Choosing a college can be an overwhelming task. Beyond the academics, one school may have a great reputation for athletics, an active intramural league and a great fitness center; while another school is known for appealing residence halls and student life. Many factors will influence one’s choice of where to continue their education such as where family or friends have attended college, scholarships, athletics, extra curricular activities, facilities, distance from home, etc.

“I was undecided about which college to attend; I had a couple of choices of where to go. I had been to the UWRF campus before for FFA events, but after going on the campus tour and talking with current students, I decided that the campus was friendly and everyone was inviting. I could picture myself as a student here.”

Grady Stehr
Agricultural Business freshman from Minnesota

The “typical” CAFES student attending UWRF is not what one may expect …

- 54% of CAFES students grew up on a farm
- Traditionally, 60% of all UWRF students are the first in their family to go to college.

In comparison 30% of CAFES entering students are the first in their family to go to college.

Nearly half the entering class for UWRF as a whole is from Minnesota. In contrast CAFES’ incoming class is…

How they learned about UWRF and what factors influenced their decision to come here…

How did you learn about UWRF?

- 68% family/friends
- 31% teacher/guidance counselor
- 22% live nearby
- 16% web search
- 15% mailing from UWRF
- 10% UWRF visit to my high school
- 2% advertisement

Word of mouth appears to be the most important factor in terms of convincing students to spend their college years in CAFES. What they hear from family and friends and what they perceive as our reputation for high quality programs are of greatest importance in their decision. When you share your positive experiences about UWRF - you are one of our most effective recruiting tools!

How attached are our students to UWRF?

Very attached! Nearly 9 out of 10 of the entering students agreed (30%) or strongly agreed (56%) that UWRF was their first choice of colleges - this is where they want to be.

The typical student reported having contact with UWRF via 3 methods listed to the right. We were pleased to see that a high percentage of students visit campus, since a campus visit was the 2nd most frequently mentioned factor that influenced their decision to come to UWRF.
Lloyd R. Nelson 1965 is currently a Regents Professor and Plant Breeder at Texas A&M University. Nelson is a leader in the development of higher yielding wheat and reygrass cultivars and a four-time recipient of the Vice-Chancellors Award in Excellence from Texas A&M.

Stephen J. Prisell 1970 was honored last spring at a retirement party for 38 years of service as a Natural Resources Conservation Service employee. He held a number of difference positions with NRCS over his career and served as the 2006 President of Wisconsin Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society of America.

Clintonville FFA Advisor Al Wichmann 1973 was surprised with an open house after the annual FFA banquet to honor him, as he retired after 34 years of service. Wichmann credits his success to “a great group of kids to work with...I thank the community for giving us a top notch Ag department.”

Dan Leiterman 1974 and his wife, Jan are the owners of Crystal Creek, a livestock nutritional supplements company focusing on natural and environmentally safe products. They are building a 18,000 sq. ft. distribution/education center in Spooner, WI.

Newly elected to the UWRF CAFES Alumni Association is Glenn Hoef7. Hoef is currently a product consultant for Accelerated Genetics.

Changeover from dairy to beef keeps the Hamblin farm a work in progress. After some four decades in the dairy business, Bob Hamblin 1977 sold his 80 milk cows in November 2005 and began a beef cow/calf operation that will eventually be pasture based. Bob and his son Don Hamblin 2002 are converting 150 acres of former row-crop acreage over to pasture and gradually building their herd size after two dry years.

Howard Sipple 1978 used his expertise of farming and gardening in the Northwoods for 30 years as a UW-Extension summer horticultural assistant in Forest County.

Susan Blachowiak 1979 is the new county executive director of the Dodge County Farm Service Agency. The Dodge County office has a staff of six full-time and one temporary employee.

Terry Geurink 1981 has been promoted to senior vice president and business banking team leader for Associated Bank’s Wausau District.

Winona Senior High School teacher Brian Sather 1982 was named the Winona public school teacher of the year. Sather has taught agriculture at WSHS for 26 years and is the school’s FFA advisor.

Jerry Wendt 1982 a teacher at Stoughton High School received an FFA Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding support of agricultural education.

Lorry Erickson 1983 is the newly elected secretary of the UWRF CAFES Alumni Association. Previously a regional editor for The Country Today newspaper and associate editor of Country magazine, Erickson is now the director of the Wisconsin Cranberry Discovery Center in Warrens.

Boarding horses, offering beginner and intermediate riding lessons, horsemanship and horse training including colt starting is the mission of Anita Behrendt 1984 in her new enterprise, Classic Hill Farms in Eagle River, WI.

Tom Perlick 1984, has skipped the middleman in growing, manufacturing and using biodiesel. He grows sunflowers and soybeans, crushes them for their oil in a small facility he built in an old dairy barn and turns the oil into biodiesel in a small conversion unit he shares with a neighbor. The biodiesel is then used in his tractors and combine to plant and harvest the oil seeds.

Jay Gundersen 1986 joined Keller, Inc. as a design/project manager. Gunderson has more than 20 years of building experience in project management and business development. He previously worked for Morton Building, Inc. as a sales consultant.

Dr. Brian Keller 1986 is a partner with Dr. Swingle at Countryside Veterinary Clinic in New Richmond, Wis. His veterinary interests include orthopedic and soft tissue surgery, dermatology and ophthalmology.

Bob Meier 1987 has been named as assistant commissioner for policy and government relations for the Minnesota DNR. His previous position with the DNR was the director of government affairs where he was responsible for the management and coordination of the DNR’s internal legislative and governmental activities and relationships.

Bruce and Brenda Long 1988, owners and operators of B-Long Holsteins of New London, WI are this year’s Distinguished Young Holstein Breeders by Holstein Association USA. They were honored at the National Holstein Convention in Knoxville, Tenn.

Jonna Zehm 1989 of Star Prairie recently opened a nursery, Garden Expressions, just north of New Richmond. She stocks hanging baskets, annuals, perennials, vegetable bedding plants, herbs and more.

Mark Clarke 1990, a Bou-Matic executive has been named the general manager of World Dairy Expo.

John Skogen 1991 and his wife Peggy 1995 & 2000 own a 300 cow-dairy farm that’s home to one of the top-producing herds in Pierce County.

Tracy Buslach 1993 and Curt Heshelman were married April 14, 2007. Tracy is a veterinarian at the Elkhorn Veterinary Clinic. They live in Elkhorn, WI.

Steve Stoppelmoor 1994 a teacher at Cochrane-Fountain City High School received an Honorary State FFA Degree as a non-member who is committed to youth leadership development.

Matt Honsey 1995 is a livestock nutritionist for the feed division of Pro-Ag Farmers Coop in Miltona, Minn. He specializes in working with customers solving ration and animal health issues.

Dr. Meredith Smith 1996 joined Countryside Veterinary Clinic in New Richmond, Wis. as an associate veterinarian. Dr. Smith cares mainly for small animals and has special interests in camelid medicine. She is the resident llama and alpaca doctor and is also the ultrasound specialist in the clinic.

Carie Bahr and Matt Cihlar 1997 were married September 29, 2007. Cihlar is currently employed with his family’s dairy farm, Cihlar Farms, Inc. of Mosinee.

Scott Imrie 1997 returned to his alma mater as an assistant coach for UWRF Falcon Football. Scott formerly had been coaching for Delavan-Darien since 2001, winning the Southern Lakes Conference title in 2004.

Tina Honsey 1997 was recently featured in the Albert Lea Tribune as a positive role model in her professional and personal life. Tina is the consumer banking manager at Wells Fargo in Albert Lea, co-treasurer of the Montessori Children’s House Board of Directors, and team teaches aerobics at the Albert Lea Family Y.

Mondovi Veterinary Service LLP recently added Dr. Peter D. Morrow 1997 to their veterinarian staff. Dr. Morrow is in the process of becoming board certified in multispecies reproduction.

Brigett Neu 1997 has been named executive director of the Wisconsin Association of Agriculture Educators. Neu has been assistant director for five years, administering the office and Website operation, organizing workshops and coordinating mentorships.

Tylor Grenzow 1998 is the new vice president of the UWRF CAFES Alumni Association. He currently is an account manager for WinField Solutions, a Land O’ Lakes Company.

Jason Nagel 1998 moved back to his family farm in Deerbrook, Wis. and he and his sister, Jolynne Schroepfer have built it to be the largest dairy in Langlade County. A $4 million expansion is planned for 2008 or 2009, where they plan on changing from dairy to beef.

Kimberly Chilson 1999 and Mark Unser were married on Saturday, April 28, 2007. Kim works for the Spring Valley School District in the Special Education Department. The couple lives in Eau Galle, WI.

Ryan Timm 1999 is the new president of the UWRF CAFES Alumni Association. He is currently a food technologist in research and development at Hormel Foods in Austin, Minn.

Jenny Russell 2001 has joined AgSource as the communications manager, focusing on coordinating the cooperative’s communication and publicity efforts.

Stacy Bobber and John Giemza 2001 were married April 14, 2007 in Arcadia, WI. John is currently self-employed as a dairy farmer. They reside in Galesville, WI.

Even though Melissa Goers 2007 has been teaching for only four years, her ambitious agenda for Gillett High School agriculture department has earned her the Wisconsin AgriScience teacher of the year.

Holly Weatherwax 2007 was recently featured in the Tri-County News from Kiel, Wis. for her landscape design with the Chilton, WI company Master Plan Landscapes.

Kari Wegenke 2002, a riding instructor at Patterson Training at the Ray Tanner Ranch in Payson, Arizona, has been named second in the nation by the American Riding Instructors Association. Wegneke was honored for her achievements in December 2007 at the National Riding Instructors Convention.
Laurel Dicke and Bradley Rortvedt 2002 exchanged marriage vows Saturday, August 4, 2007. Rortvedt is employed by Alltech as a territorial sales manager for the state of Minnesota. The couple resides in Belle Plaine, MN.

Craig Kulig 2002 joined the staff of the Pigeon Falls State Bank and its Bank of Whitehall branch as the agricultural lender.

Army Sgt. Aaron C. Eversman 2002 has been decorated with the Army Commendation Medal for honorably and faithfully serving in the Army for three years. The medal is specifically awarded to individuals who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, have distinguished themselves by acts of heroism, meritorious achievement or meritorious service.

Jessica Evel and Edgar Foster 2002 exchanged wedding vows on August 18, 2007. Foster is currently employed at Eis Implement in Two Rivers as a salesman.

Aimee Finley 2003 is currently renting her grandfather’s farm and running a 115-cow dairy farm near St. Charles, Minn. Although many women are involved in farming, Finley is in an elite group of less than 10 percent of farms in Minnesota where a woman is the principal operator.

Michelle Bangart and Darrin Wirt 2004 exchanged wedding vows on July 14, 2007. Wirt is currently employed by Wirtland Holsteins in Lewiston, Wis.

Leah Miller 2004 and Jason Bernick were united in marriage on May 19, 2007. Leah is currently employed at Citizens Accounting. The couple lives in Loyal, WI.

Justin Fortney 2004 is the newest member of the City of Hastings planning department. He moved back to the area after being a city planner in Abilene, Texas.

Sonja Jens 2005 joined the Waterville-Elysian Morriston School district as a Vocational Education/FFA instructor/advisor.

Tyler Wortz. 2006 was recently promoted to Lead Assistant Designer for Curbside Landscape and Irrigation. Wortz works together with the Senior Designer on large residential projects ranging from patios and plantings to outdoor kitchens and pools.

Random Lake School Board hired Aaron Greisen 2006 as the new agriculture teacher at the start of the 2007-2008 school year. Greisen is a member of the Army National Guard and was on active duty in support of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” from June 2004 to November 2005.

Peter Thewis 2007 and his family hosted Chequamegon Dairy Day last June on their 350 acre farm in their recently renovated dairy parlor which can accommodate 120 milking cows.

Newsbriefs from the College

After more than 32 years in the classroom Tom Goerke, professor of animal science will be retiring this spring. Tom’s affiliation with UWRF extends back even further though, because he earned his B.S. from UWRF. As a faculty member, his skill as a teacher was quickly recognized. After just 6 years of teaching he was honored with UW-River Falls highest award by being named UW-River Falls 1981 Distinguished Teacher. Tom had a positive impact on thousands of students through his teaching and advising activities and as a long-time advisor for the Block and Bridle club. We wish him the best.

Gayle Dodge, program associate for the Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Engineering Technology departments, was recognized for her outstanding service with the Chancellor’s Recognition Award for Classified staff. In his nomination letter, David Trechter chair of the Agricultural Economics Department wrote, “Gayle is simply integral to the functioning of both departments with which she works. …Without a doubt, Gayle Dodge is the best [program associate] with whom I have had the pleasure of working.”

CAFES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SUPPORT

Name(s) _________________________________________ (please include maiden name if married since graduation)
Address/City/State/Zip _________________________________________________________       ____ check if new
Email Address ________________________________________________________________
Telephone _____________________          Year(s) of Graduation _______________________ 

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Please check:
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Clip and return to:
CAFES-Dean’s Office
210 AGS, 410 S. 3rd St.
UW-River Falls
River Falls, WI
54022-5001
Today’s CAFES Alumni

The CAFES Alumni Association has many traditions - just as the University we all attended. The CAFES Alumni Board aims to preserve past traditions as we create new ones. I would like to take this time to tell you about the activities the CAFES Alumni Association supports.

One of the oldest traditions of the CAFES Alumni Association is the gathering of our members to renew old friendships, promote new ones and offer networking opportunities for CAFES graduates. Typically, our largest reception takes place in Madison on the Friday in October during World Dairy Expo. This reception has become a focal point for friends to be reunited and for our new graduates to become involved. We sponsor several additional alumni receptions over the course of the year - each January, in connection with the Wisconsin Fertilizer, Aglime and Pest Management Conference, and in July during Wisconsin Farm Technology Days. A few years ago we initiated a new event, the Twin Cities Area Alumni Luncheon. New this year, is the CAFES Alumni Reception in Wausau on February 28th.

Scholarship support is another important tradition of our Association. Scholarships help offset the rising costs of tuition, and are important for recruiting and retaining some of the brightest and most talented students. We fund several CAFES scholarships awarded to deserving students each year. In times of down investment markets we have provided additional funds to meet the obligations of endowed scholarships. We have also increased financial commitments to scholarship funds so the college can increase award amounts.

Another area the Alumni Association supports is the Ag Technology Contest. This contest brings FFA students from Minnesota and Wisconsin high schools to the UWRF campus. CAFES students and faculty organize judging events and academic contests for the FFA members. Along with providing monetary support for a CAFES student coordinator to organize the activities, we also support a scholarship for participating high school students. All first place individual winners of the 14 different contests are eligible to apply for this scholarship. This activity has been a nice recruiting tool.

Finally, each year as a new class of CAFES seniors are about to graduate from UWRF we host a Senior Breakfast to celebrate their accomplishments. Faculty and staff are invited to attend and personally congratulate the graduates. An industry and faculty speaker offer the graduates some advice and general expectations for their first job. At this event the guests enter as students and leave as CAFES alumni.

In closing, I sincerely thank you for your past support of the CAFES Alumni Association, and I thank you in advance for your future support.

Best wishes,
Mike Wachtendonk