Amy Andersen named outstanding Geneva employee

BY AMANDA GARRIS

my Andersen, assistant to the associate chair in the Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology, was named the Outstanding Employee for 2010 at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) town hall meeting, Feb. 26. She was honored for her contributions to the workplace and the experiment station community.

“Amys brings outstanding work skills and much more to the job every day,” said Tom Burr, station director. “She is not only the go-to person for coordinating activities in the Geneva plant pathology group but also someone who improves the quality of the work environment for everyone at the station. She is a wonderful person to have as a friend and colleague.”

Andersen’s nomination had broad support from her colleagues, as the following excerpts from letters written in support of her nomination attest:

• “There is no better ambassador for the Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology, the NYSAES, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences or Cornell.... Her compassionate and can-do attitude carry the day.”

• “If there is any problem or task that she can help with, she never hesitates to do so, which is why a familiar phrase around the department is ‘go ask Amy.’”

• “I have never met anyone who quietly does so much, is so helpful to everyone and never boasts about her accomplishments. She works tirelessly on behalf of the department and does those extra little things that make the work environment pleasant and welcoming.”

• “Amy works with the Station Club on planning and carrying out station community events and is the organizer and driving force behind the annual Barton Lab Chili Cook-Off held in February for the past 12 years.”

• “Amy works hard, maintains very high standards, does whatever she’s asked to do and then some—she just basically holds everything together around here,” said her supervisor Wayne Wilcox, associate chair of her department. “Especially during a time beset with belt-tightening and a degree of uncertainty for the future, the value of someone with Amy’s positive effect on the esprit de corps should not be underestimated.”

Andersen began her career at the station in 1998 as an administrative assistant in the Department of Plant Pathology. Since then, she has supported the department through significant changes, including administrative restructuring, four different department chairs and the recent merger between the Ithaca and Geneva departments.

“Right from the beginning, I had a sense of family at the station,” said Andersen. “Everyone treated each other with respect, and you were recognized as an equal amongst your peers. I am extremely honored to receive this award and to have been selected by a group of my peers. The experiment station is a wonderful place to work, and I’m truly blessed to be able to work with and count as my family so many great people here.”

In addition to gifts from the station—a framed plaque, $50 in Station Club merchandise, a $50 Wegmans gift card and flowers—Andersen’s name will be added to the plaque honoring the previous 28 awardees on display in Jordan Hall.

Amanda Garris works as a freelance writer.

Trisha Denesovich: Affecting change through the Employee Assembly

I n anticipation of upcoming Employee Assembly (EA) elections, Trisha Denesovich, systems support engineer and service manager for Integrated AV Engineering in Cornell Information Technologies, shares why she enjoys working on the EA.

Q: Trisha, what is your role at Cornell?
A: I assist our Integrated AV/Engineering team in determining, evaluating, administering and supporting the technology used for such services as video conferencing, webcasting, digital signage, web streaming, and conferencing and video distribution.

Q: Why did you come to Cornell?
A: I left the corporate world to move to Ithaca and seek employment at Cornell five years ago. I’ve never regretted this decision. Ithaca is an awesome place to work and I enjoy the community.

Q: What do you like most about Cornell?
A: I’m a “pro-Cornell” employee. I value such components of working at Cornell as the flexibility policy; the educational opportunities available to staff; the wellness initiatives; the custom health plans; the Cornell Program for Healthy Living; the diversity and inclusiveness of staff, faculty and students; the intriguing research and work done at the university; and opportunities for professional development. The existence of the EA is, in my opinion, another benefit one wouldn’t necessarily find in the corporate world.

Q: When did you join the EA?
A: I was elected to the EA last May, for a two-year term. I’m also serving as a member of the EA’s Communications Committee.

Q: What do you like most about serving on the EA?
A: I enjoy the sense of awareness I’ve gained in regards to staff by becoming a member of the EA. It’s an excellent opportunity to know what is going on at the university, meet others and become involved in the affairs and decisions affecting staff members, especially at a time when change is ripe. The EA, in itself, is a clear commitment to the university’s dedication to serving the best interests of staff.

Q: Why is the EA important?
A: I believe it is important for staff to know that the university does look out for their best interests. The EA consists of staff members dedicated to this purpose. They actively seek awareness of those staff in need and engage in “synergistic efforts” with other governance committees, human resource offices and the president to address these concerns. I’m astounded by the momentum the EA creates to continually seek ways to improve our working lives.

With that said, I’m well aware the EA does not have final decision-making power over important and widespread decisions. However, I do trust difficult decisions impacting Cornell staff are made with much consideration, concern and collaboration, including influence by the EA.

Q: How do you think you can help?
A: Even after I had worked here for five years, I knew little about the Employee Assembly. Only after the economic downturn did I start to think about this group as a way to keep abreast of decisions impacting staff.

I believe that change starts with each individual, within themselves and in their own working environment. My work at Cornell involves systems engineering support of collaborative video technologies. In this regard, I’m hopeful my “circle of influence” in the EA may increase staff engagement and awareness through means of facilitated communications, especially for others who may be seeking to change an unhealthy or unfulfilling situation. This may be as simple as posting an EA bulletin on one of our CUNYview digital signs, or perhaps encouraging web conferencing as a means to reach out to staff and hear their concerns.

If nothing else, I hope that my experience with the EA and Cornell lets others know that they can work to affect change at Cornell, both in their immediate work environment, and through groups such as the EA.

Dragon Day Parade

The 110th Dragon Day is March 18, beginning at 1 p.m. First-year architecture students will parade the dragon they have designed and fabricated from Rand Hall, south on East Ave., right on Campus Road and then north on the South Central walkway through Ho Plaza to the Arts Quad. T-shirts designed by the students are $12 and can be purchased online at www.aap.cornell.edu/arc/programs/dragon.frm. T-shirt sales help fund the construction of the dragon.
Confidence: A Wiki for the rest of us

Confidence is a collaborative website, created as a wiki, where people can create pages, comment on pages, and contribute to discussions. The new version, released in March 2011, offers improved performance, enhanced usability features, and better accessibility improvements. The site is targeted at the Cornell community, with a focus on providing a space for collaborations and knowledge sharing.

Jim Sheridan, Office of Human Resources

Jim Sheridan, a Syracuse area native and Solvay resident, is a well-known figure in the Cornell Human Resources organization. The site highlights his work and contributions to the department.

Jim Sheridan, an administrator at Cornell's Human Resources, is a well-known figure in the organization. The site focuses on his contributions and work at the university.

The annual Maple Weekend at the Cornell University Dairy Farm will be held March 17-18. Attendees will enjoy a pancake breakfast served by Cornell's Dining Services and a tour of the dairy farm facilities. The event is open to the public, and tickets are required. Information: www.ansci.cornell.edu/4H.

On "Staff Notes"

Visit “Staff Notes” on CornellCast to learn more about Jim and his work: www.cornell.edu/video?videoID=1098&startSecs=0&endSecs=985.

Karen Brown, Campus Life

Karen Brown, Campus Life, is a contributor to the "Pawprint" publication, providing content and updates on campus life and events.

Cheryl McGraw, Human Resources

Cheryl McGraw, a member of the Human Resources team, is featured on the site, highlighting her role and responsibilities.

Valerie McMillen, designer, production, 255.1535, 227.0079, dlg25@cornell.edu

Valerie McMillen is recognized for her contributions to the design and production of the "Pawprint" publication.

Donna Goss, campus relations editor, circulation, 255.7837, dg23@cornell.edu

Donna Goss is acknowledged for her role in circulation and campus relations, providing essential support to the publication.

Matt Klein, Academic Tech Support and User Svcs

Matt Klein is highlighted for his support in academic tech support and user services.

Tami Morin, director of information services, 255.5300, TM25@cornell.edu

Tami Morin is recognized for her leadership in information services.

Ruth Merle-doyle, CU Wellness

Ruth Merle-doyle is acknowledged for her work in CU Wellness, focusing on health and well-being initiatives.

We will be implementing the first phase of zone management in Zone 1, the contract campus facilitates, by the end of the month. Understanding that this is a new process that will bring about changes to how we request and perform facility-related needs, the following Q&A is meant to address questions that we have received and may arise as the process is implemented in subsequent areas of campus.

Q. How is a “zone” defined and determined?

A. Zones are designated areas of campus within which it has been determined that there are topics such as facilities master planning and capital planning. CMs are expected to be involved in the creation of the zones, including those areas of concern as the reporting of alleged bias activity, finding such areas of concern as the reporting of alleged bias activity, finding areas of concern as the reporting of alleged bias activity, finding such areas of concern as the reporting of alleged bias activity, finding areas.

Q. How will academic and administrative units determine the base level of services and can they customize the level of services?

A. Academic and administrative units will determine the base level of services and can customize the level of services through a process of consultation and collaboration.

Q. How is this tied to the budget model?

A. Zones are defined through an alignment of units and activities on campus, related to the base level of services and the level of service that is provided to the units.

Q. What is the role of the “Zone Facilities Manager” and “Campus Manager”?

A. Key attributes include:

- Campus Manager (CM) - A strategic resource and partner for units within facilities management and the units and funding will follow the person in their new role. Other management around resources and strategic planning, and implementing strategies. The goal is to balance additional costs with savings through efficiencies and reduction of duplications.

- Zone Facilities Manager (ZFM) - A strategic resource and partner for units within facilities management and the units and funding will follow the person in their new role. Other management around resources and strategic planning, and implementing strategies. The goal is to balance additional costs with savings through efficiencies and reduction of duplications.

- Serves as a resource to the strategic level in the units on procurement of the services provided by the facilities division.

- Represents a zone at the strategic level in the units on procurement of the services provided by the facilities division.

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**New diversity initiatives: preschool art program and revived networking groups**

A s a part of a new program, teachers are guiding preschoolers at the Cornell Child Care Center to make masks, mandalas, and murals, not just to help the children express themselves and learn to collaborate but also to advance the university’s strategic initiative to promote diversity.

What does Cornell’s Inclusive Early Childhood Community Art Program, launched Feb. 14, in a newly designed art room, have to do with the university’s strategic initiative to “make significant progress toward a more diverse faculty, student body and staff in terms of gender and race and ethnicity”?

“Everything,” said Lynette Chappell-Williams, associate vice president for workforce diversity and inclusion. The program, led by director Terry Plater, teaches concepts of inclusion and diversity to preschool children through art and will be expanded within the local community as well. And that could benefit faculty recruitment, Chappell-Williams said.

“Through upcoming retirements and faculty renewal, Cornell will be able to increase the racial/ethnic diversity of its faculty body,” Chappell-Williams explained. “Similarly, as current staff members retire, opportunities for recruiting diverse staff members will emerge.”

But to attract people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, potential newcomers must find Cornell to be a place where their children would thrive and where they and their partners could find work and contribute to their community.

The inclusive art program is just one more way of providing that sense of belonging.”

This semester, the Office of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion has also revived four Cornell College Network Groups, known as affinity or employee resource groups at other organizations. They are designed to help minority faculty and staff network with each other, and for women, men, faculty, students, minority veterans and LGBT faculty/staff. The groups provide an opportunity for the targeted groups to network, share ideas with the university about ways to increase retention of the relevant population, learn more about Cornell as an employer and as a faculty/staff recruitment efforts, Chappell-Williams said.

In addition, President David Skorton is establishing an advisory council to share best practices and advise Cornell on strategies related to diversity and recruitment.

Creating an environment that welcomes differences is not just about race and ethnicity, Chappell-Williams said, but also involves age differences, veteran or disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and religion. For information, see http://itc.cornell.edu/diversity/lastingchange.

**Einarson elected to institutional research group**

**M** aine Einarson, senior research associate in the office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP), has been elected to the board of directors of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) for the 2011-12 Associate Professional Development Service Committee.

Einarson joined IRP after receiving her Ph.D. in 2001 from the Center for the Study of High- er and Postsecondary Education, University of Michigan. She has been a leader in Cornell’s efforts to survey students and faculty, and currently co-chairs the Student and Academic Services Research Group.

“Her survey research and analysis in Institutional Research and Planning at Cornell have resulted in this honor,” said Elmira Mangum, vice president for planning and budget, “and I am sure that her leadership in and presence in the research group will continue to advance the group’s goals of improving teaching and learning for all through innovation, creation of knowledge and awareness of existing conditions.”

All 14 institutional membership associations founded in 1996 by educators who understood the need for higher education to use information and institutional decisional processes and to support increased student learning, retention and success.

Einarson has been in AIR for many years, including as editor of the association’s monthly newsletter, e-AIR. She has also published a number of articles in peer-reviewed literature. Along with her colleagues Marjohn Carlberg and Michael Maier, Maine was a recipient of the 2007 Joseph Pettit Award for the exemplary use of data to illuminate campus issues of significance.

**Learn something new!**

A n eight-week course on birds, a six-week course on their predecessors, and six-week course on blending yoga and art provide a bridge to summer.

**Spring field ornithology**

The annual Laboratory of Ornithology eight-week spring birding course begins March 23.

Wednesday evening lectures, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Lab of Ornithology, are taught by Steve Kress and other experts. The lectures discuss identification skills, bird behavior, museum collections, and local birding foraging for local central New York birds.

Weekend field trips leave the Lab of Ornithology at 7 a.m. and visit habitats including Sapsucker Woods, Dryden Lake, Derby Hill, Braddock Bay, and other select birding locations in central New York. Students choose between Saturday or Sunday trips.

Overnight trips are offered to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in Seneca Falls, NY, and/or the Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Oceanville/Cape May, NJ area. Extra fees apply for overnight trips.

Enrollment is open to anyone over the age of 12. Space is limited. To enroll or for fees or information, go to http://www.birds.cornell.edu/lo, contact the SFO course coordinator at 607-253-1266 or 607-575-5252, or email will.joseph@cornell.edu (toll-free) number at 800.843.2473, or send an email to joxclass@cornell.edu.

**Museum of the Earth**

“The History of Life” begins March 31 at 5:30 p.m., Museum of the Earth. This free six-week course will discuss:

- April 3 - Fossils of the Mesozoic
- April 14 - Beaks and frills and spikes, oh my
- April 21 - Ash to ash: The evolution and extinction of the dinosaurs
- April 28 - Necropols, the research of volunteer Lenore Durkee
- May 5 - Fossil preservation inside local caves -combining modern technology. Research of volunteer Don Wilson, using Cayuga Medical Center’s CT X-ray and PRI’s new scanning electron microscope.

The course is taught at a high-school to college level, so bringing children is strongly discouraged. Information: http://www.museumoftheearth.org/ or contact Jaime Hazard, email to hazard@ museumoftheearth.org.

**Yoga and art**

Beginning March 3, 4:45-6 p.m., and continuing at the same time each Wednesday day through May 4 at the Johnson Mu seum, learn more about works of art and then practice yoga with instructor Zanab Zakari in a room with a beautiful view of Cayuga Lake. Bring your own mat or purchase one at the session. Beginners and drop-ins are welcome.

Cost: $34 for all 6 sessions, $48 for John son members or $10 per class for drop-ins. Email jze9@cornell.edu to register for all six weekly sessions (full-session payment is required at the first class).