



Photo by Scott Swoboda

John Davidson, retired professor of botany, continues to pursue his interests by teaching a botany course in Centennial Education Program. Davidson retired from the UNL faculty last June.

Age doesn't hinder lively existence of retired teacher; he's busier now

By Mary Jo Fitzl

Take one retired botany professor, mix in an interest in people, add a zest for life and a pinch of adventure, and out comes the unique personality of Prof. John Davidson.

"I've got a 60-page manuscript written on how I got started in flying," Davidson said, weaving his Volkswagen in and out of traffic en route to the Lincoln Municipal Airport. He was taking one of his students in the Centennial Education Program to the airport to check requirements and credits for earning a pilot's license.

"I just sold my Cessna 150 (airplane) last spring," he said, speaking about his 13-year flying career.

Flying is just one of Davidson's interests. Pastimes ranging from growing bonsai plants to frying fish and chips in a downtown restaurant fill his time.

"I'm busier now than before I retired," he said with a chuckle.

Davidson, 65, retired as UNL botany professor last June, but continues to teach a botany course through the Centennial Program. "I didn't like the idea of completely cutting off cold from teaching," he said.

No texts, lectures, labs

Davidson has developed his own teaching technique, which he calls the Inductive Method.

"You've never seen anything like it before," he said, explaining that no texts, lectures or labs are required in his courses. He said students learn by doing, drawing conclusions based on their observations and experiments.

"Students who are tired of being spoon-fed and want to do some thinking on their own rave about it," he said.

Davidson taught several summer school sessions at the University of California at Berkeley, where he introduced

his Inductive Method.

"I'm the first professor I know of to try this method with a class," he said. "I've found out quite a few places—the English Dept. at UNL especially—have been using this method."

Last spring, Davidson was named an outstanding professor by the NU Foundation.

Davidson combines his love for education with his hobbies. He will teach the art of growing bonsai, miniature wild Japanese trees, through the Communi-versity program this fall.

'Real' fish and chips

Several nights a week he can be found in the kitchen of the Greenwich Cafe, 1917 O St., mixing up his own special batter for fish and chips. The native of Scotland began cooking at the Greenwich when he wanted to show friends how "real" fish and chips tasted.

"I was wondering if there would be a market for fish and chips in Lincoln," he said. Sales have been building since Davidson began cooking at the cafe four years ago.

"Heck yes, we sell a lot. We used to cook five pounds of fish. We're up to 100 pounds a night now," he said.

At his "professorial home" in southwest Lincoln, Davidson rummages through a cluttered array of books, papers and the packaged beauty products his wife sells. Pulling a well-worn book off the shelf, he hands it to his flying student.

"This book will convince anyone to try flying," he said. "Giders, that's something else I haven't tried. I haven't flown a balloon either."

But if it's true that you're only as young as you feel, that balloon ride may be next on Davidson's schedule.

Ask the IRS for Publication 506. The Collection Process (Taxpayer Rights and Obligations).

montessori lectures

A series of presentations of Montessori pre-school education for the community. They will be held at the school: 2815 Austin Drive, Lincoln, 485-8110, 7:30-9 p.m.

Monday, September 13: Maria Montessori: How children learn
 Monday, September 20: Classroom management
 Monday, September 27: Learning to read with the Montessori materials.

The programs will be of special interest to parents, educators, college students, and related professionals.

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For those who would like additional information, a series of free, one hour, orientation lectures have been scheduled. At these free lectures the course will be explained in complete detail, including classroom procedures, instruction methods, class schedule and a special 1 time only introductory tuition that is less than one half the cost of similar courses. You may attend any of the meetings for information about the Lincoln classes.

These orientations are open to the public, above age 14, (persons under 18 should be accompanied by a parent if possible).

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These special one-hour lectures will be held at the following times and places:

- Tuesday, September 14 at 6:30 and again at 8:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 15 at 6:30 and again at 8:30 p.m.
- Thursday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m. and again at 8:30 p.m.
- Monday, September 20 at 6:30 and again at 8:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m. and again at 8:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, September 22 at 6:30 p.m. and again at 8:30 p.m.

These free lectures will be held in the conference room of the Radisson-Cornhusker Hotel, 13th and M Streets.

If you are a businessman, student, housewife or executive this course, which took 5 years of intensive research to develop, is a must. You can read 7-10 times faster, comprehend more, concentrate better, and remember longer. Students are offered an additional discount. This course can be taught to industry or civic groups at "Group rates" upon request. Be sure to attend whichever free orientation that fits best in your schedule.

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