

# Student keeps strong tie to rural life, community

BY CHRISTINA FECHNER  
Staff writer

Making a difference in the community by starting something new takes time, passion and determination.

Chris Gustafson, a sophomore agriculture economics major, knows all about hard work and the importance of keeping ties with his community.

A native of Mead, Gustafson feels rural Nebraska should be conserved and appreciated, so he began two programs to help accomplish that goal.

Gustafson set up a scholarship fund based on community service activity and is planning to publish a book of works written by rural Nebraska writers.

"Those of us who live out there (in rural Nebraska) love it, and I want to preserve the memories of living there," Gustafson said.

The scholarship is in its first year and will consist of two \$1,000 scholarships for students from Mead.

The requirements are not based on grades.



Gustafson

Instead, one is based on the number of community service hours a student completes, and the other is based on the quality of service the student does.

The scholarship money comes in part from the Rural Commission School. Gustafson donates half of his earnings from his job at the Rural Development

Commission to pay for the rest of the scholarships.

He gives part of his money because he thinks serving the community helps to give a person more ownership of his or her town.

"I got involved with community service in Mead, and I enjoyed living there more," Gustafson said.

Jo Lowe, network coordinator at the Rural Development Commission, works with Gustafson and thinks the scholarship is a great idea.

"He's wonderful because he's so involved in community service activities," Lowe said. "The

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book and the scholarship fund are great because I think there has been a turnaround in the value of rural communities."

The book will consist of short stories, poetry and editorials written by people who live in rural Nebraska.

The center for Rural Community Revitalization and Development on East Campus is helping to advise and financially support the book.

The group is accepting as many writings as possible.

Gustafson said he thinks the book will be important because if the way of living ever trans-

formed dramatically in rural Nebraska, his book would be a record of what rural living used to be like.

"Just in case rural life does change, the book will be a showcase of rural values," Gustafson said.

Yasmin McEwen, who worked with Gustafson last summer and fall while he was at an internship, said his work will affect people in an important way.

"Chris has a solid work ethic and is very goal-oriented. I think the book is a great idea," McEwen said.

"It's important for rural Nebraskans to have their opinions heard."

## Meetings offer Y2K advice

Sessions to be held for the community, individuals

BY KIMBERLY SWEET  
Senior staff writer

As Jan. 1, 2000, draws closer, the University of Nebraska extension office wants people to be prepared.

No one really knows what is going to happen, but residents should have basic knowledge they can use in any emergency, said Tom Dorn, extension educator for the cooperative extension in Lancaster County.

Two workshops will be held to educate citizens on how to be prepared for Y2K and other potential disasters.

On Monday, a workshop focusing on the steps community entities are taking to be ready for Jan. 1 will be held.

Representatives from public service providers, utility companies and medical providers will be at the extension office.

Saint Elizabeth's Hospital, Alltel and members of the city and state emergency management teams will also be on hand to talk about preparations, Dorn said.

On Nov. 29, a second workshop will be held to discuss individual and home preparedness.

Extension educators will talk about how to have a supply of safe drinking water, what kind of food to have on hand, securing alternate sources of heat and light and other topics, Dorn said.

Some may not be worried about preparing for Y2K, Dorn said, but his office has received numerous calls over the past year from concerned citizens.

Some, he said, have legitimate concerns. Others have gone overboard.

"I know people who are buying dehydrated food, have bought land outside of the city to avoid chaos or are building bunker-type buildings," Dorn said.

Instead, Dorn recommended taking some easy steps to be prepared. Having a few days' supply of food you usually eat and filling bottles with water are examples.

Even if people aren't concerned about Y2K, the workshops will provide citizens with information they can use in any disaster situation, Dorn said.

"I think it's wise to be prepared for any emergency," Dorn said. "And no one has a 100 percent guarantee that we will not experience some kind of glitch with Y2K."

TOM DORN  
extension educator

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The workshops will be held at the Lancaster Extension Conference Center, at 444 Cherrycreek Road.

They begin at 7 p.m. and last about two hours. The workshops are free, and no pre-registration is required.

Dorn said he expects more than 150 people to attend each workshop.

"People have called this office for all types of questions," Dorn said. "I know there is concern by a number of people."

## Indonesian leader jibes critics

President Wahid speaks without notes, makes fun of opposition repeatedly in defending Aceh province.

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — President Abdurrahman Wahid delivered a barrage of one-liners and jibes Thursday aimed at lawmakers opposed to his controversial plan to hold a referendum on the future of strife-torn Aceh province.

Nearly blind, he spoke without notes and had even his harshest critics laughing, introducing both humor and democratic accountability into a chamber that had been a dour rubber stamp for past authoritarian rulers.

"It's hard to distinguish the house from a kindergarten," Wahid joked after legislators criticized him for abolishing two government departments.

Many members of the 500-seat parliament fear an Aceh referendum could trigger the disintegration of the world's fourth most populous nation, whose 210 million people are spread over 17,000 islands.

A lengthy guerrilla campaign for independence for oil- and gas-rich Aceh has gathered pace since East Timor voted in August to break with Indonesia.

Summoned before the legislature for the first time since it elected him head of state a month ago, Wahid

called for constructive debate to solve the country's economic and social problems.

The president quoted Russian communist revolutionary Lenin in accusing some lawmakers of trying to create "infantile disorder" instead of better government.

"I myself say there should be a referendum in Aceh. Differences of opinion will make Indonesia great in the future," he said in his nationally televised speech. "Through debate we can have a good result. This is what we call reform."

In defending the performance of his own Cabinet, Wahid pointed to neighboring Malaysia. Ministers there, he joked, did little more than play golf.

"Finding ministers in Malaysia is very difficult because they are playing golf," said Wahid, drawing gales of laughter. "That's the job of a minister. If you want to find them, find them on the golf course. Their business affairs are conducted on the golf course."

Wahid's decision to comply with parliament's demand to appear and explain his views was a democratic departure from the dictatorial past. Former leaders, particularly President Suharto, used the parliament merely as a compliant tool.

"What I saw was very new in the political scene here," said Benny Subianto, who teaches political science at several Jakarta universities. "Before, parliament was a scared

place. Suharto never wanted debate, so he kept everything very serious."

On Tuesday, during an official visit to Japan, Wahid suggested a vote could be held in Aceh within seven months. But he reportedly said in Jakarta on Wednesday that such a ballot would not allow the Acehnese people to opt for full independence, only to choose whether to have greater self-rule.

The leaders of several major political parties have said they would block any Aceh referendum.

Separatism has long boiled in Aceh, on the northern tip of Sumatra island. Dutch troops occupied the region a century ago after a long colonial war. Following World War II, when Indonesia declared independence, Aceh was promised — but never got — autonomy.

Separatists claim the central government has siphoned off much of the province's wealth. Some want to set up an Islamic state.

More than 5,000 people have died or have disappeared since a guerrilla war started in 1989, human rights activists say. They accuse the Indonesian military of widespread atrocities.

Thousands of non-Acehnese have begun fleeing in fear of being targeted by rebel fighters. But rebel leader Teungku Abdullah Syafie said Thursday that the insurgents only plan to hold a series of peaceful pro-independence demonstrations.

## Researchers: UNL is the place to be

More than 1,500 people conducted research at the university last year, several from foreign countries.

BY MICHELLE STARR  
Staff writer

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is a haven for researchers from across the country and around the world.

About 1,500 total researchers worked at UNL in 1998, not including about 400 research and clinical staff and faculty researchers, according to Institutional Research and Planning's most recent figures.

"The university is a good research program and has a lot of support from the faculty," said Charles Wood, UNL molecular virologist and researcher.

Wood, originally from Hong Kong and now a U.S. citizen, left the University of Miami to work at UNL three years ago.

He said the main reason he came to NU was because of the research opportunities the faculty provided.

The office did not know the exact number of graduate student researchers and individual research programs conducted at UNL.

The exact number of researchers from other countries and other states was also unknown, partly because it is difficult to classify research, said Marsha Torr, vice chancellor for research.

"Almost every faculty describes themselves as a researcher," Torr said.

Torr also said researchers weren't tracked, but the university had to follow where the money goes.

Some departments estimated the information.

About 5 percent of the researchers in the UNL agricultural department are from other countries, said Darrell Nelson, dean and director of the agricultural research division.

Foreign researchers' work helped the community by producing new agricultural techniques and procedures, which have lowered farming expenses, Nelson said.

"We've had a tremendous impact on Nebraska's economy," Nelson said.

Vadin Gladyshev came to the United States from Russia about two years ago because of UNL's opportunities in biochemistry.

"I was offered a job, and I like the scientists here in the department," Gladyshev said. "The science is relatively good, and it's competitive."

Kulvinder Gill, assistant professor and plant molecular cytogeneticist in agronomy, agreed.

"The department of agronomy and agriculture research is one of the top in the country," said Gill, who came to the United States about three years ago.

For others, UNL could have been any other university, as long as it offered a good program.

For Heriberto D. Cerutti, an associate professor of biological sciences and a native of Argentina, it was not important what institution he conducted his research at, but more important that it was in the United States.

UNL did not stick out among other institutions in the United States, but it did provide better facilities than those offered in Argentina, Cerutti said.

"In essence, the United States has a research structure that is tops. So the United States has the advantage here — any university in the United States," Cerutti said.

UNL's research program has also extended opportunities to people across the country.

Steve Baenziger, a Harvard University graduate, came to the university 13 years ago to help feed people through research at NU's agriculture department.

"The wheat-breeding program is, well, in my opinion, the best in the country," Baenziger said.

He said he has been able to take an active part because about 80 percent of the state's wheat was a result of UNL's wheat-breeding program.

John Janovy, a biological sciences professor and Oklahoma native, came to UNL 33 years ago because it was a great job in a city he could raise a family in, he said.

At UNL, Janovy said he was able to attract the researchers he wanted to, do the research he was interested in and teach his classes the way he wanted to.

"I was far more interested in freedom than stature," Janovy said.

The funding for foreign researchers is similar to that of native researchers.

About 50 percent of their funds come from tax dollars; the other 50 percent is made up of state and federal grants and agencies, as well as private companies, Nelson said.

Many of the foreign researchers like living in the United States and, after their research is completed, become citizens, Nelson said.