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Communications Advisory Board seeks nominations for 5 members

The advisory board to ANR Communication Services is seeking to fill five positions on the board and is accepting nominations that can include, but are not limited to, specialists, advisors and faculty affiliated with the Division.

Nominations are due by July 31.

You may nominate yourself or someone else. Send nominations, along with the addresses of the candidates, to Communications Advisory Board chair *Susan Laughlin* (email: susan.laughlin@ucop.edu).

If nominating yourself, indicate your areas of expertise, what prior involvement you have had with Communication Services and your membership in workgroups, continuing conferences or other coordinating bodies.

The board provides advice and support to CS Director *Bob Sams* on program connection, resource allocation prioritization, major policy issues, budget and planning. It also provides oversight of the peer review process for ANR educational materials.

Board members are appointed by Associate Vice President *Henry Vaux Jr.* and serve three-year rotating terms. The board meets quarterly. The new appointments begin in November.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture bestows Honor Awards on 9 Division scientists

By *Pam Kan-Rice*

Nine members of the Division were honored for exemplary service and achievements by Agriculture Secretary *Ann M. Veneman* at the 57th Annual USDA Honor Awards Ceremony on June 13 in Washington, D.C.

The annual awards are the most prestigious awards given by USDA.

The awards to UC were given for research on glassy-winged sharpshooter, biological insect control, methyl bromide alternatives and postharvest quality of produce.

UC's honorees were among this year's 85 award winners.

UC Cooperative Extension Kern County viticulture advisor *Jennifer Hashim*, UCCE viticulture advisor emeritus *Donald Luvisi* and UC River-

side entomologists *Nick Toscano* and *Matthew Blua* received an award in the category "Maintaining and enhancing the nation's natural resources and environment."

They share the award with their colleagues from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Agriculture Research Service, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Kern County Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M and private industry "for participation in a cooperative multi-agency team resulting in the development and implementation of areawide pest management strategies against the glassy-winged sharpshooter in California."

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UCCE Master Gardener Program helps low-income Angelenos grow fresh produce

Yvonne Savio—who leads the Common Ground Garden and Master Gardener programs for Los Angeles County Cooperative Extension—takes an unusual approach in recruiting master gardeners.

Other CE programs seek experienced gardeners to train as master gardener volunteers. Savio looks for people who are experienced community volunteers and have a basic knowledge of gardening. Then she teaches them the more extensive horticultural know-how that master gardeners are renowned for.

Savio chose this tack because the main job of master gardeners in Los Angeles County is to assist people in low-income areas. These master gardeners provide free workshops, educational materials, free seed packets and

technical assistance to residents wanting to grow vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers in community gardens. Many low-income areas lack supermarkets

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State budget watch

As of today (July 11), California remains without an approved state budget for 2003-04. We continue to monitor the situation in Sacramento, especially funding for UCCE and AES, and will keep you informed of significant developments.

Steve Nation

Executive Director, Governmental and External Relations

Names in the news

■ UC Davis plant biologist *Eduardo Blumwald* has been selected to receive the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Award in recognition of his research on salt-tolerant crops. The award has been presented annually since 1975 to one individual who is considered to have made the most significant contribution to American agriculture during the previous five years. It includes a \$15,000 cash prize and the \$5,000 Alfred Toepfer Scholarship, which will enable a UC Davis student to study agriculture in Europe. A public award ceremony and seminar by Blumwald, a professor in the pomology department, will be held in September at UC Davis.

In 1999 Blumwald and colleagues announced that they were able to genetically engineer salt tolerance in the Arabidopsis plant, a cabbage relative commonly used in plant research. Continued research in this area led to the 2001 announcement of a genetically engineered tomato plant that thrives in salty irrigation water. The discoveries were published in the journals *Science* and *Nature Biotechnology*. (Excerpt from UC Davis News Service)

A few items recently reported by UC Berkeley's College of Natural Resources:

- *Irma Adelman* was named a Distinguished Fellow of the American Economic Association for 2003.
- *Howard Rosenberg's* book, "Ag Help Wanted: Guidelines for Managing Agricultural Labor," and its companion website, <http://www.aghelpwanted.org/>, received the 2003 Extension Award.
- *Alain de Janvry* was nominated as one of the 60 living Americans who contributed most to agriculture across the Americas as part of the 60th anniversary of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture.
- *Barbara Allen-Diaz* was named 2002 range manager of the year by the California Association of Range Management.
- *Peggy Lemaux* was awarded the Dennis R. Hoagland Award from the American Society for Plant Biology for outstanding plant biological investigations in support of agriculture. Her website, ucbiotech.org, won an award for outstanding website from the American Society of Agronomy. (CNR items submitted by *Kathryn Stelljes*).

USDA Honor Awards (from p. 1)

The glassy-winged sharpshooter very efficiently spreads the bacterium that causes Pierce's disease, which kills grapevines. The scientists have been working with growers in Tulare and Kern counties to reduce the number of sharpshooters that survive the winter in citrus orchards before moving into vineyards in the spring.

Husein Ajwa, a UC Cooperative Extension vegetable crops specialist based at a USDA office in Salinas, was recognized for the category "Expanding economic and trade opportunities for United States agricultural producers."

Ajwa received a group award with his colleagues from USDA Agricultural Research Service "for developing, demonstrating and promoting alternatives to methyl bromide soil fumigation that protect the environment and allow farm-

ers to continue producing economical and high quality fruits and vegetables."

Brian Federici, UCR professor of entomology and entomologist, received an award in the category "Promoting health by providing access to safe, affordable, and nutritious food."

Federici received the award "for research on insect pathogens, especially Bt [*Bacillus thuringiensis*], that has led to a novel biocontrol product and has significantly enhanced understanding of microbial pest control agents."

Federici's research exploits Bt as an environmentally safe and effective method for controlling agricultural insect pests. Several significant discoveries during his career include explaining and manipulating the processes that make certain Bt strains more potent, engineering novel biocontrol agents, and discovering a new class of insect viruses.

COMING UP



You can access information on hundreds of ANR-related events by visiting the online ANR calendar at <http://calendar.ucanr.org/>

Nominations sought (from p. 1)

Current members of the advisory board are: *Leslie (Bees) Butler*, agricultural economics specialist, Davis; *Bill Chaney*, farm advisor, Monterey County; *C. Thomas Chao*, assistant horticulturist, Riverside; *Joe Connell*, farm advisor, Butte County; *Mary Louise Flint*, director, IPM Education and Publications, Davis; *John Harper*, county director, Mendocino County; *Rose Hayden-Smith*, 4-H youth development advisor, Ventura County; *Frank Laemmlen*, farm advisor, Santa Barbara County; *Susan Laughlin*, assistant vice president-planning and budget; *Martha Lopez*, nutrition, family, and consumer science advisor, Madera County; *Carole MacNeil*, specialist and statewide director, 4-H YDP, Davis; *Ellen Rilla*, county director, Marin County; and *Ed Weber*, farm advisor and county director, Napa County.

Professors *David Slaughter* and *Michael Delwiche*, and professor emeritus *Paul Chen* in UC Davis Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering received an award as part of the Northeast Multistate Research Group Northeastern 179 "for increasing the efficiency, security, sustainability and profitability of the fruit and vegetable industry through applications of the technologies developed."

Slaughter develops sensing equipment, including a device that detects mold in tomato juice and another that measures the sugar content of peaches and nectarines. Delwiche is developing biosensors to detect *Salmonella* in the irrigation water for alfalfa sprouts. Chen created a device that assesses fruit firmness so farmers can determine whether peaches and pears are ready to harvest without cutting open the fruit.



Here are a few examples from UC Delivers about how research and public service from the Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension help California families. More than 140 UC Delivers stories are now posted at the [URL above](#).

New 4-H workshops improve skills of after-school workers

A new series of workshops created by 4-H youth development staff in the San Francisco Bay Area has already helped more than 800 after-school program workers enhance their professional skills. Called the Community Agency Learning Series, these workshops are designed to improve the competencies of after-school workers who supervise more than 8,000 children ages 5 to 14 in Northern California. The sessions incorporate the latest research to build workers' skills in youth development, program management and successful after-school teaching methods.

A similar program is being developed for Southern California communities.

The workshops fill an important professional development need because these workers generally do not have teaching credentials but are increasingly called on to improve the academic work of low-achieving students. Contact: *Faye Lee* (650/871-7559; fhlee@ucdavis.edu).

UCCE study documents trend of grandparents raising grandchildren

Alameda County Cooperative Extension took a lead role in sounding the alarm about the unmet needs of grandparents who are primary caretakers of their grandkids. UCCE teamed with the department of aging in Oakland in the early '90s to train grandparent peer counselors to assist caregivers with financial, health and social needs and provide psychological and advocacy support.

UCCE researchers also assembled census data documenting that the trend of grandparent caregiving is on the rise in California and nationally and publicized these findings nationwide. This research is used nationally to establish caregiver needs, set program priorities and change public policy. UCCE's goals are to bring the needs of grandparents and at-risk grandchildren to the attention of health and human ser-

vice professionals and facilitate program development for caregiving families throughout California. Toward that end, UCCE has participated in workshops, conferences and a nationally televised satellite conference to educate grandparents, health professionals and policy-makers about the issues facing caregivers. Contact: *Mary Blackburn* (510/639-1274; mlblackburn@ucdavis.edu).

Low-income families boost their financial security and well-being

UCCE nutrition, family and consumer sciences advisors participating in a national study of poor rural families discovered that two-thirds of Latino families eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit did not apply for it. Use of the EIC has elevated millions of children above the poverty line.

UCCE advisors began distributing English and Spanish material explaining the eligibility and filing process for EIC to the participants in their study. Similar information was disseminated as part of UC's Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program.

As a result, the number of Latino families receiving the tax credit doubled, making an important contribution to their financial security and the children's well-being. Contact: *Karen Varcoe* (909/787-5241; karen.varcoe@ucr.edu).

UCCE helps parents prepare healthy bag lunches for children

A study by the San Luis Obispo office of UC Cooperative Extension revealed that 81 percent of the lunches brought by children to preschool were poor nutritiously and that nearly 25 percent compromised food safety. Seeking a remedy, UCCE staff obtained funding to launch a countywide educational campaign in which they developed five easy-to-read handouts and a poster in English and Spanish to show parents

and other family members how to pack healthy lunches. A follow-up study conducted after the free handouts were distributed showed that parents were including more whole grain and protein foods for better nutrition and selecting foods that would not promote the growth of food-poisoning bacteria. Contact: *Shirley Peterson* (805/781-5951; sspeterson@ucdavis.edu).

GreenNet Project brings families together, enhances communities

In 2002 the U.S. Department of Agriculture selected the Neighborhood GreenNet Project as a Program of Excellence in its annual compilation of the best youth programs in the nation.

GreenNet is a collaboration between the UC 4-H program in Santa Barbara County and the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara. The project engages parents and children living in subsidized housing complexes in small horticultural business startups. These families also learn how to use computer technology to access information, new markets, planning tools and networking capabilities. More than 600 youth and 375 housing resident families have participated in the 10-week, hands-on training since 1998. The project reinforces the sense of family by children and parents working together to design their small gardening enterprises.

Many of the teens participating in the program have gone on to college, with several majoring in business, technology, science or science-related fields. They say their GreenNet experience helped them develop new work skills and self-confidence.

The year after the project started, vandalism at the housing project, which was costing around \$60,000 a year, dropped to near zero. Police and housing property management said it was due to the efforts of GreenNet. Contact: *Michael Marzolla* (805/692-1730 or <http://greennet.ucdavis.edu>).

Master Gardeners (from p. 1)

and produce stores, so fresh produce is often costly, in short supply or simply not available locally.

Community gardens improve the quality of life in a neighborhood, says Savio, who is a board member of the American Community Gardening Association. Residents who garden can eat a more balanced and nutritious diet and save money by growing some of their food. Their gardens beautify the community and can spark further development. Gardening also increases social interactions, encourages self-reliance and creates opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education.

The Common Ground Garden Program in Los Angeles is the only program of its kind in California and one of 20 urban gardening programs in the nation to get USDA funding.

Even after USDA cut its funding by half, UC's program flourished, in large part because former program manager *Rachel Surls* (appointed UCCE county director in July 1997), and then Savio tapped new resources by partnering with other community groups and reenergizing the Master Gardener Program. Savio even expanded its reach: Master gardeners now serve nearly 50 of the 60 community gardens in the county.

The Master Gardener Program currently has 136 active volunteers who last year contributed 10,288 hours serving 64,320 clientele, Savio says. They also earned 5,199 hours of continuing education.

"I feel privileged and a great deal of pride about our Master Gardener Program," Savio says. "We are mandated to help low-income residents, and how they are learning to garden more successfully is just thrilling."

Savio joined the L.A. County office of UCCE in 1994. A member of the UC community since 1978 (UC Davis botany extension and vegetable crops extension), she's also a well-known garden writer and photographer whose organic gardening column appears monthly in the Sacramento Bee. Her regional report for Southern California coastal and inland valleys appears biweekly on www.nationalgardening.com.

Q: Yvonne, who do master gardeners serve in Los Angeles County?

We are funded to assist low-income communities. Master gardeners give workshops and help folks at community gardens, battered-women shelters, homeless shelters, half-way houses—anyone who needs help learning how to grow their own food. We also have telephone and email help lines to answer questions from the public. In addition, we hold workshops to encourage people to eat more of the vegetables they have grown (or purchased at farmers' markets) by preparing them in a nutritious and simple manner.

Q: Master gardeners volunteer for at least 50 hours a year?

That's the minimum. They must also earn at least 15 hours of continuing education to learn more about gardening and community outreach. They can get that by coming to monthly MG meetings. We always have a speaker chosen on the basis of the topics that the MGs say they want to learn more about.

Q: How do you recruit MG volunteers?

Originally we called for gardeners who wanted to volunteer. But we weren't getting a good match with the gardens we had started in low-income areas. The people at those gardens weren't responding to master gardeners from other communities.

So we began seeking volunteers who already were working with low-income folks prior to becoming master gardeners. They had their own local connections, and we started to be able to get some real networking going on.

This networking has given us the opportunity over the last three years to reconnect with every single one of the community gardens in the county to see which ones are still active.

I made a point of visiting with individual gardens and their managers. Of the 60 gardens that we know now are truly active, there are fewer than a dozen that don't have at least one gar-

dener who has come through the MG course.

We determined that we really needed to have people from the gardens come to the course and be the official MG connection for that garden.

That is what has made our program much more successful. Our MGs learn about different projects in the larger LA community and each one of those gardens feels that it has a direct connection with University-based information.

Q: Is it harder to teach this group of volunteers?

No, because they are really interested in learning more about gardening and helping people. We definitely don't teach a university-level course. For us, hands-on activities and practical application of information and techniques are paramount.

That, in my mind, is precisely what Cooperative Extension is all about: We are taking the University's research-based horticultural information and translating it into layperson's terms so that regular, everyday gardeners can use it immediately in their gardens.

ANR REPORT

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Send news items and comments to Gabriele Kassner, **ANR Report** editor, Office of Governmental & External Relations, 1111 Franklin St., 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607-5200. Telephone: 510/ 987-0631; fax: 510/ 465-2659; email: gabriele.kassner@ucop.edu

ANR Report is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, W.R. Gomes, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of California.

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