Being department chair is a memorable experience in that one becomes a part of all the successes (and failures) of all of those around you. I am always amused at how the successes outnumber the failures. Thus it is a pleasure to report to you what’s happening in EH.

Our students are, of course, our first priority. Our undergraduate major, Environmental Horticulture and Urban Forestry (EHUF), is doing well with 40 currently enrolled in the program. The curriculum is currently being reviewed by the campus and we anticipate a lot of positive feedback.

I have also involved myself in the EH Club- a group of students who love horticulture and want to be involved in it. As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, the group is quite active and is making significant contributions to the EH department as well as the Arboretum.

We continue to have a number of outstanding graduate students. Two students in my group, Soo Hyung Kim and Loren Oki, completed their Ph.D. theses in recent months. Dr. Kim is now at the USDA ARS facility in Beltsville, Maryland. Several new Ph.D. students have already joined my group to help me with my research program.

Two of Richard Evans’ students are making progress on their degrees. Kris Kiehne has submitted a draft of her Master’s thesis and Lisa Bruni has finished her mycorrhizal research and has begun writing her Master’s thesis.

Rik Smith, Ph.D. Candidate in Ecology, working in Alison Berry’s Lab, gave a talk at the 2002 California Chapter of the American Society of Agronomy’s California Plant and Soil Conference in Fresno on February 6, 2002. The title of Rik’s talk was “Leguminous Cover Crop Residues in Orchard Soils: Nitrogen Release and Tree Uptake.”

EHUF graduate, Angela Pratt (2000), is finding success as a free-lance horticultural writer and photographer. Her article titled “Our Valley Oaks” appeared in the February 2002 issue of Sacramento Magazine, inspired by the 150-year old valley oak in her front yard.

As you probably know, the aging departmental facilities are in need of rejuvenation. So it is a pleasure to be able to announce that the department has secured a substantial amount of space in a brand new building on campus. We have been allotted enough space for three professors and their research teams. This facility is some distance away from the main EH site so that we will soon have two locations. Thus when you visit us in the future, be sure to know whether you should go to EH-south or EH-north.

Alison Berry, Michael Barbour and Truman Young are set to move into their new offices and labs in the newly completed Plant and Environmental Sciences Building (better known as EH’s “North Facility”) in May and June. They are looking forward to collaborating with their new neighbors in the department of Agronomy and Range Science and the department of Land, Air and Water Resources.

Dave Neale, Tom Ledig and Wes Hackett are all in various stages of becoming adjunct professors in the EH department. This courtesy title will allow them to serve as Principal Investigators on certain granting agency proposals.

NASA’s Technology Transfer and Commercialization Office via their Inventions and Contributions Board has just awarded Don Durzan and Frank Ventimiglia recognition and an award for the invention “Recovery of taxanes and drugs by cell and biosynthetic surface enrichment with anti-drug antibodies” (US Patent 5,981,777). This award will be highlighted in Tech Briefs: Engineering Solutions for Design and Manufacture.

Greg McPherson won the US Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station’s Civil Rights Award. For the past five years he has applied for and received matching funds from the Station’s Summer Intern Program to hire up to three college students as part of the Asian-American Pacific Islander Recruitment Initiative at UC Davis. He recruited and then hired as permanent employees two students from historically black universities in support of African American Multicultural Workforce Initiatives. Today, women and minorities account for 7 of the 12 permanent and term employees at the Center for Urban Forest Research. In addition, Greg partnered with the Sacramento Tree Foundation’s NeighborWoods program coordinators to establish a volunteer-based tree inventory and monitoring program in Oak Park, one of Sacramento’s most socio-economically challenged and underserved neighborhoods.

As you can see by the photo at left, Dave Burger is having too much fun on his sabbatical leave. Currently, he is organizing this year’s OHECC meeting (Ornamental Horticulture Extension Coordinating Conference) at a resort in Palm Springs. Such is the life of a former department chair.

Principal Superintendent of Agriculture, Ron Lane, is approaching his tenth year of service with the University. His efficient management of the department’s greenhouses is a model for the campus and several researchers from other departments seek to run experiments there. Ron will be teaching another University Extension course scheduled for May 24, 2002. “Hydroponic Vegetable Production” is an intensive one-day introduction to the commercial production of vegetables using various water culture methods. Find out more information at University Extension’s web site (http://extension.ucdavis.edu/).

As you see on page 3, we have made some significant plans that include you. Please come visit us on Picnic Day. While we certainly had the general public in mind in our planning, we were particularly interested in providing something of interest to you, our friends. GP