

...the independence her... gives... to the... outside the...  
nes. She drives to the senior center for lunch, to the grocery store and on other errands.

downsizing or programs ranging  
BUDGET, PAGE 10A

## reviewed, key legislator says

record of traffic violations. In April, she renewed her Iowa driver's license for two more years.

But a debate swirls nationally around older drivers, many much younger than Shiber: Do they pose an exceptional risk to others and thus should face additional restrictions, or would that constitute improper age-based discrimination?

State Sen. Tom Rielly, D-Oskaloosa, who is chairman of the Iowa Senate Transportation Committee, said last week that he wants to review the state's policies for licensing older drivers.

"I have no problem if a senior citizen wants to keep their driver's license, but obviously

DRIVERS, PAGE 8A



## In the news

Paul "Jud" McKinney, 79, of Winterset is accused of striking and killing bicyclist Mark Grgurich of Des Moines. McKinney, who is to be arraigned Monday, had a driver's license despite vision problems.

## Older-drivers statistics

A Des Moines Register review of state driving statistics found:

<b>20%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>67</b>
of licensed drivers in Iowa are over the age of 65.	of the crashes in Iowa were caused by drivers over 65 in 2008.	of the 87 Iowans killed in crashes in 2008 were 65 or older.

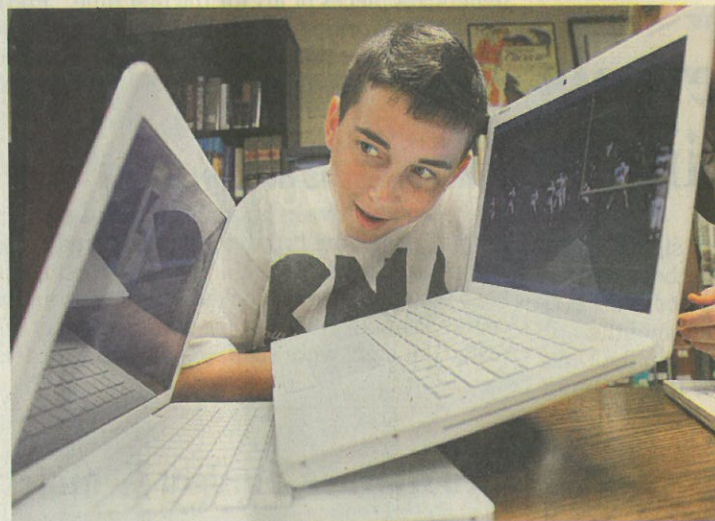
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RODNEY WHITE/THE REGISTER

Shae Saxton is a technology pioneer at Van Meter Junior/Senior High School. He works on a class presentation about the school's football team, blending highlight footage and information about the team.

## World Food Prize

# Food Prize's growth brings the ag world to Des Moines

By PHILIP BRASHER

pbrasher@dmreg.com

New York and Washington, step aside. When it comes to global food and agriculture policy, Des Moines is the place to be for at least one week each year.

The World Food Prize Foundation's annual award ceremony and symposium have grown in the past decade into a leading international forum where scientists, policymakers, corporate executives, heads of foundations and anti-hunger advocates debate the best ways to increase food production and relieve malnutrition.

The event attempts to summon the pomp of the Nobel prizes amid Iowa's harvest. Downtown Des Moines becomes a global village, attracting officials from the United Nations' World Food Programme, African ministers in native dress, and small farmers from the Philippines or Mexico — and, this year, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft and one of the world's leading philanthropists.

This conference runs Wednes-

FOOD, PAGE 11A

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attack by assailants who wore military uniforms. The strike appeared to be a warning to the military that its planned offensive on the insurgents' strong-

beaten back by insurgents before. The spasm of violence was confirmation that the militants had regrouped despite recent military op-

capital, Islamabad. Abbas said special forces had surrounded the building. "They will decide how and when to act," he said. No group claimed respon-

The United States has been pushing Pakistan to take strong action against insurgents using its soil as a base for attacks in Afghanistan.

Clinton and mediators from Switzerland helped broker a solution, U.S. officials said. Better ties between Turkey, a regional heavyweight, and poor,

of about 1.5 million Afghans during World War I. Turkey has denied genocide, saying that the toll is inflated and that those killed were victims of civil war.

## FOOD

FROM PAGE 1A

day through Friday.

It will be the first since the death last month of the food prize's founder, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Borlaug. But in his absence, the event is growing.

The conference will draw a record 800 people from 65 countries, up from attendance of 150 or so a decade ago. Registration was closed in advance of the meeting for the first time ever.

The speakers this year include Gates, who is putting part of his fortune toward revolutionizing food production in poor countries. His foundation has pumped \$1.4 billion so far into various agricultural development programs across Africa and elsewhere. He is having the projects analyzed to see which ideas work best.

Also speaking is economist Jeffrey Sachs, author of "The End of Poverty" and an adviser to nations and a pal of Bono and other aid-oriented celebrities.

**The theme of this year's** conference: Food as an issue of national security. Kenneth Quinn, the foundation's president since 1999, said his goal was to make the conference the "Davos of global food security," a reference to the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"This is the place to come and talk about how we are doing," Quinn said.

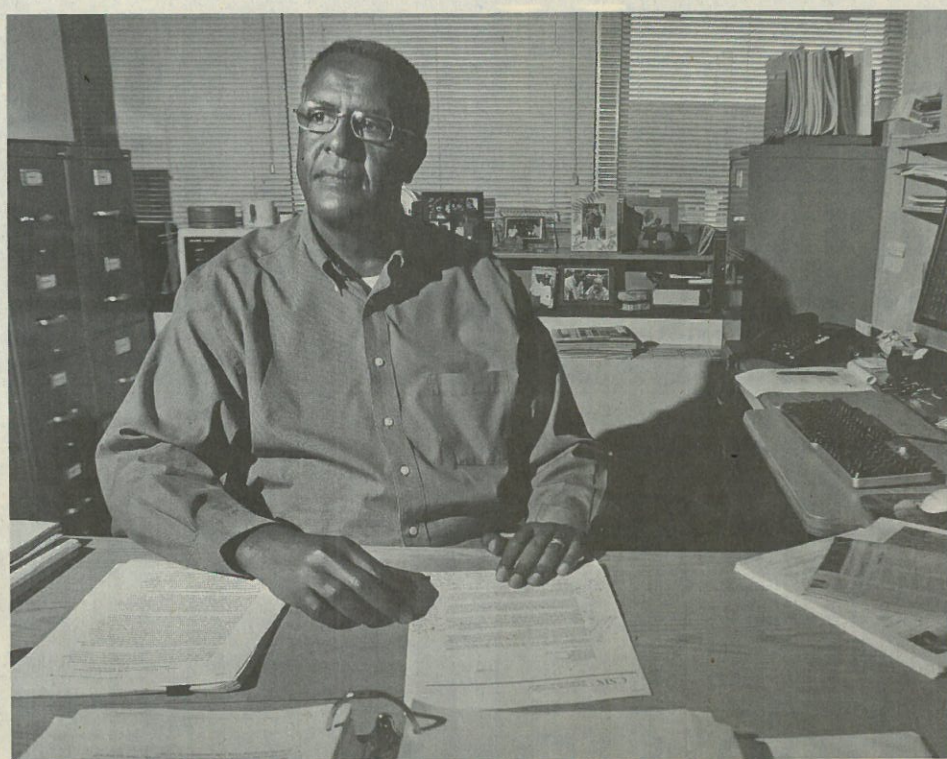
Featured speakers will include the agriculture minister of Pakistan and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who will talk about the need for agricultural development in that troubled region.

The farm minister of Afghanistan was invited but could not make it because of that country's disputed election.

Also participating are several food and agribusiness CEOs, including Indra Nooyi of PepsiCo and Ellen Kullman of DuPont.

The Borlaug Dialogue, as the conference is known, provides "a very practical forum" for discussing global food needs at a time when world hunger has been getting increasing public attention, said Peter McPherson, co-chairman of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa and a frequent participant in the conferences.

"The spike in food prices" last year "got everybody focused," said McPherson, who is chairman of Dow Jones & Co. and president



JOURNAL & COURIER PHOTO

**The 2009 World Food Prize laureate, Gebisa Ejeta, a Purdue University plant geneticist, bred sorghum to resist a weed that plagues crops in his native Ethiopia and elsewhere in Africa.**

▶ This week, Des Moines' century-old riverfront library will be transferred to the World Food Prize foundation. **Business, Page 1D**

▶ Read essays from four speakers at the Norman Borlaug International Symposium being held in conjunction with the World Food Prize. **Opinion, Page 1 OP**

of an association representing the nation's research universities.

The presentations and discussions "help crystallize and drive opinion on practical issues," he said.

Other forums exist for debates over food policy, including international economic summits or meetings sponsored of the United Nations' food agencies. But the dialogue at such meetings is often restricted by political sensitivities, said Joachim Von Braun, director general of the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, D.C.

**The Des Moines event** honors and attracts a who's who of agricultural scientists, current and former World Food Prize laureates. This year's laureate, Gebisa Ejeta, bred sorghum to resist a weed that plagues crops in his native Ethiopia and other African countries.

"People come well prepared and go away better informed," Ejeta said.

The focus on scientific achievement also gives the conference a hopeful tone, Von Braun said, noting that the conference's hallmark is its focus on evidence-based methods of alleviating hunger.

The laureates have proved

that progress can be made.

"It's not just optimism. It is evidence-based optimism," he said.

Having the conference in Des Moines highlights the state as a center of food production while showing Iowans that "we live in a global economy," said Helen Jensen, an agricultural economist at Iowa State University.

A speech by this year's laureate on the ISU campus Monday night is likely to draw several hundred people, she said.

**The symposium's growth** coincides with the arrival in 1999 of Quinn, a former ambassador, who set about creating an event akin to the Nobel Prize ceremony that doubles as a forum for education and debate. Borlaug was originally the big draw, because of his stature as the father of the "Green

Revolution," the advancements in crop yields credited with saving millions in Asia from starvation.

But the event also has gained momentum by word of mouth and through the networks of laureates, activists and others who have attended, Quinn said.

Quinn has tried to pick provocative, timely topics.

In 2001, the focus was agroterrorism — "Risks to the World Food Supply" — a topic selected before the Sept. 11 attacks. A Food and Drug Administration official later told the foundation that the ideas developed at the conference shaped the government's bioterrorism policy.

The 2007 conference — "Biofuels and Biofood" — would precede the dramatic run-up in food prices that brought worldwide criticism of U.S. biofuels policy.

## World Food Prize and related events

A dozen side events and conferences, some public and others private, will take place in Des Moines this week in conjunction with the World Food Prize ceremonies. Among the activities:

- This year's World Food Prize laureate, Gebisa Ejeta, will speak at 8 p.m. Monday in the Sun Room at the Iowa State University Memorial Union. Ejeta is a native of Ethiopia and is a professor, plant-breeder and geneticist at Purdue University.
- The Community Food Security Coalition is holding its national conference in Des Moines through Wednesday. For more information, see [CommunityFoodConference.org](http://CommunityFoodConference.org).
- The Iowa Hunger Summit on Tuesday at the downtown Marriott Hotel will feature a town-hall meeting on ending childhood hunger in the United States. The meeting is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa and the International Food Policy Research Institute are using the meeting to issue reports. See [IowaHungerSummit.org](http://IowaHungerSummit.org) for more information.
- The World Food Prize's Borlaug Dialogues are held Wednesday through Friday at the downtown Marriott. The keynote presentation Thursday is by Bill Gates. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with an endowment of more than \$30 billion, has a focus on overcoming hunger by helping the small farmers in developing nations boost their productivity. Also speaking Thursday: U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. special envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke.
- The 2009 Borlaug Laureate award ceremony is Thursday evening at the State Capitol.

• Other groups are having private meetings, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's global development team, the North American Agricultural Journalists, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and delegations from the Canadian, Dutch, Egyptian and Mexican agricultural ministries.

The conference last year focused on the 2008 food crisis.

"We're always reaching for the cutting edge," Quinn said.

**Although the conferences** have been relatively free of controversy, the subject of increasing food production isn't, and some agricultural development advocates think the focus on technology espoused by many attendees is misplaced. Borlaug himself was criticized for the Green Revolution's reliance on fertilizers and other chemicals.

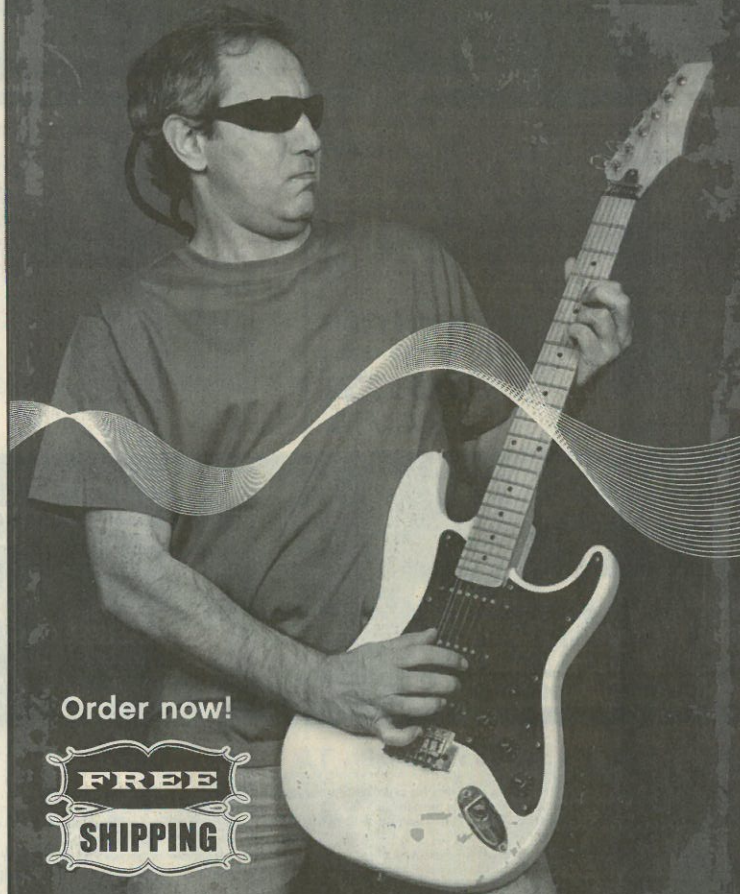
"The public discourse coming out of the administration and the G20 meetings and different

public meetings lately has overemphasized this idea that technology alone could fix these problems," said Karen Hansen-Kuhn of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minneapolis.

She cited as an example of a good policy a project in Malawi where farmers are encouraged to plant certain trees among their crops to add nitrogen to the soil in lieu of applying costly chemical fertilizers.

As it turns out, that would be a familiar topic for many visitors to Des Moines this week: The concept of using trees as fertilizer won Pedro Sanchez, a Columbia University scientist, the World Food Prize in 2002.

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