In a familiar high-school chemistry demonstration, an instructor first uses electricity to split liquid water into its constituent gases, hydrogen and oxygen. Then, by combining the two gases and igniting them with a spark, the instructor changes the gases back into water with a loud pop.

Scientists at the UI have discovered a new way to make water, and without the pop. Not only can they make water from unlikely starting materials, such as alcohol, their work also could lead to better catalysts and less expensive fuel cells.

“We found that unconventional metal hydrides can be used for a chemical process called oxygen reduction, which is an essential part of the process of making water,” said Zachariah Heiden, a doctoral student and lead author of a paper accepted for publication in the Journal of the American Chemical Society, and posted on its Web site.

A water molecule (formally known as dihydrogen monoxide) is composed of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. But you can also combine two hydrogen atoms and stick them onto an oxygen atom. The actual reaction to make water is a bit more complicated: \(2\text{H}_2 + \text{O}_2 = 2\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{Energy}\).

In English, the equation says: To produce two molecules of water (\(\text{H}_2\text{O}\)), two molecules of diatomic hydrogen (\(\text{H}_2\)) must be combined with one molecule of diatomic oxygen (\(\text{O}_2\)). Energy will be released in the process. This reaction (\(2\text{H}_2 + \text{O}_2 = 2\text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{Energy}\)) has been known for two centuries, but until now no one has made it work in a homogeneous solution,” said Thomas Rauchfuss, a UI professor of chemistry and the paper’s corresponding author.

The well-known reaction also describes what happens inside a hydrogen fuel cell. In a typical fuel cell, the diatomic hydrogen gas enters one side of the cell, diatomic oxygen gas enters the other side. The hydrogen molecules lose their electrons and become positively charged through a process called oxidation, while the oxygen molecules gain four electrons and become negatively charged through a process called reduction. The negatively charged oxygen ions combine with positively charged hydrogen ions to form water and release electrical energy.

The “difficult side” of the fuel cell is the oxygen reduction reaction, not the hydrogen oxidation reaction, Rauchfuss said. “We found, however, that new catalysts for oxygen reduction could also lead to new chemical means for hydrogen oxidation.”

Help needed in locating campus’s missing historical markers

By Sharita Forrest

Assistant Editor

Campus officials are asking for help in locating several historical markers that were stolen from various sites on the Urbana campus.

The bronze markers, which weigh 75 pounds each and were installed on 6-foot poles secured in several feet of concrete, commemorate significant people, discoveries, events and places in the history of the Urbana campus. Five markers have been stolen since early 2006; two have been recovered, and campus officials hope that community members can help find the three markers that are still missing.

On Oct. 20, a marker titled “Lincoln Scholarship” that was installed on the north side of Lincoln Hall in honor of Abraham Lincoln scholar James Garfield Randall. It is believed the marker was taken during January or early February 2006. Two other markers that were stolen have been recovered, including a marker titled “Archaeas” that was stolen just a little over a week after it was installed. The marker, which was installed at Burrill Hall on Nov. 2, commemorates scientist Carl Woese’s discovery of a third form of life. On Nov. 10 pedestrians alerted a UI police officer who was on patrol in the area that they had found the marker lying in the grass near the loading dock at Kranert Center for the Performing Arts. The marker had been broken off its mounting pole and moved about one block.

Around Sept. 24, a marker commemorating John Bardeen’s Nobel Prize-winning theory of superconductivity was stolen from the southeast side of Burrill Bridge on the Bardeen Quad north of Green Street but was later recovered by police. The markers are valued at $1,500 each, and installation for each marker costs an additional $500. Thirty-one of the markers have been placed around campus thus far, and nine other markers have yet to be installed, according to Robin Kaler, associate chancellor and director of public affairs, who chaired the committee that oversaw the project.

“The markers were installed to build pride and help people see all of the amazing things that have happened on this campus, so it’s really disturbing that a few people would – for whatever reason – take away the opportunity for other people to learn about the important things that have happened at Illinois,” Kaler said.

Anyone with information about the missing historical markers is urged to contact Investigator Robert Murphy at the UI police department at 333-1216 or to call Champaign County CrimeStoppers at 373-TIPS.

UI scientists discover new way to create water

By James E. Kloeppe

News Bureau Staff Writer

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13,696 people already have registered to receive campus emergency messages on their cell phones. Have you?

If not, go to: emergency.illinois.edu

It’s really that easy

Celebrating history

A Naperville-based consulting group – supported by UI Extension – helps organizations grow and succeed.

Business solutions

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The work was funded by the U.S. Department of Energy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIPS.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Job</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Web</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACHIEVEMENTS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIEF NOTES</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALENDAR</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENTS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Committee on Equal Opportunity and Inclusion, chair of the Senate Committee on the Senate's Nov. 5 meeting, the senate passed a pre-filed resolution presented by Belden amended to preclude an operational role for the board in academic and educational matters at this university. The report said the donors' intent to propagate a particular ideology that the donors may feel is underrepresented on the campus is not the proper function of a university to advance a donor's ideological agenda, whatever it may be.

The committee also had concerns about the influence of the ACLGF's governing document. The report stated: "The donors will decide to contribute to intellectual diversity and civil debate within the university in ways that are consistent with these principles."...
On the Job: Runelle Shriver

A herd of pigs—stuffed pigs, ceramic pigs, pigs of all shapes and sizes—waits on Runelle Shriver’s desk at University Laboratory High School. During Shriver’s more than 20 years as a librarian at Uni High, she has collected hundreds of pigs—many of them gifts from students. A senior library specialist, Shriver clearly adores the school’s students, and keeps in contact with some who have graduated and gone to other universities or to jobs.

Tell me about your career here at the UI.

I started working at the Labor Library—which doesn’t exist anymore—in 1987. I ran this library for a few years. I worked at the Library Labor several months and then came to Uni. I had to quit MacArthur High School in Decatur during my senior year to work to support my family. That was very hard for me to accept. I later earned my PhD. When I got married, my husband was in the military and we bounced all around Texas until he left the military in 1974, then we moved to Villa Grove.

What are your job responsibilities?

I’m a jack-of-all-trades. You name it; I do it. I catalog books and recently reedited the fiction and graphics section. I assist students with library research. Every year, I hire four to seven kids and train them to work in the library, shelving and processing books. A few summers ago, we replaced the shelving throughout the library, and had to move all the books out, and then back in before school started.

We also take care of equipment repairs and replacements for the electronic equipment in the school—TVs, VCRs, DVD players, projectors. Every summer, I pull all the electronic equipment and make sure it functions, and have it cleaned and repaired.

What has kept you here so long?

The kids. I love the kids. I’m just so entertained by them. And they are so smart. We have the best teachers anywhere; they are so talented. I turned 65 this year and was going to retire, then decided, ‘I’ll just work five more years.’

How did the pig herd start?

I don’t know. One day I just looked up, and I had all these pigs on my kitchen window. The kids bring pigs in to me. Between my desk and home, I have 400 to 500, and that doesn’t count all the ones I’ve given away. I’m just as excited about every new pig I get. I have them all over my bedroom, the living room and the dining room. When we have foreign visitors at the library, they’re always attracted to the pigs, and like to pick them up and look at them.

What do you like to do when you’re not working?

Read. My bedroom is full of books: westerns, romances and mysteries. I particularly enjoy Robert Parker and Nora Roberts. A few years ago, I met Nora Roberts. We were both reading for Pages for All Ages in Savoy. I collect baskets and seashells. My sister lives in Mobile, Ala. And I go down to visit her, and it’s so much fun. They try to talk me into moving down there. If I could, I’d move to Tybee Island, Ga. Then when I die, they could just row me out in a rowboat and dump me out.

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Laws often follow when public’s fears exceed reality

By Anwiti Aviram

When hijacking fears soared out of control after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, tougher airport screening quickly followed to ward off panic that could have crippled the nation’s airline industry.

New laws and strengthened enforcement are often rooted in similar times of angst when the public’s worries far outstrip real- ity, says Amitai Aviram, a UI law professor who has written extensively on examining how enacting and enforcing laws influence the public perception of risk.

“It wouldn’t work by having politicians say ‘Look, you’re all scared by an imaginary thing. The public won’t buy it,’” Aviram said. “But they will buy it if politicians say ‘We’ve just enacted a law and because of that you shouldn’t be worried.’ That’s more credible.”

Politicians also risk creating worry rather than allaying it by targeting issues that the majority of the public has not yet deemed a problem, Aviram said.

“Just last week, I was on the plane flying barefoot in the yard and picking it up. You should feel safer, but instead you worry about the horse you might be out there.”

Aviram argues that lawmakers should consider those side effects as they consider bills that span perception gaps.

“The impact of laws on the perpetrators is only part of the story,” he said. “The other part of the story is what message it sends to the rest of the public, the ‘how much risk’ people may drive more recklessly—they might not wear seat belts.”

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Aviram says lawmakers aren’t the only ones who engage in what he calls “bias arbitrage.”

“Bias arbitrage,” a term he popularized in two different financial markets to capitalize on price differences.

Private businesses, such as insurance companies, can jump in when the public overestimates risks such as car burglaries or natural disasters, Aviram says. And the media make their living showcasing risks that others consider or debunking problems that have been overestimated.

One of Aviram’s three articles on law and risk perception recently was published in the George Washington Law Review; two others will appear soon in the Washington & Lee Law Review and the Yale Journal on Regulation.
Staff members recognized for service, retirement

By Sharita Forrest Assistant Editor

It was a bet with her husband that led to Molly Hackney’s joining the university’s workforce. “He thought I couldn’t get a job or make it for six months if I did,” Hackney said. “I think I kind of proved him wrong.”

Indeed she did. Hackney officially retired this year after a 30-year career at the UI, all but 17 months of which she spent as a secretary in the Office of Admissions and Records, but found her niche when she moved to instructional resources, where she did much of the unit’s billing. “When I first started, everything was done manually, by typewriter,” Hackney said. “Later, I learned how to operate the PLATO system and did the billing through it, and then of course, (technology) just exploded.”

When Hackney joined the unit, it was on the fourth floor of Engineering Hall, which had a small fire station behind it at the time, a feature that came in quite handy on those occasions when Hackney arrived at work and discovered flooding from broken water pipes and other minor emergencies. The town of Oakwood, where she and her husband Howard, now retired, have lived in the same house in Homer for 30 years, which landed her in a nursing home for two months and another very perplexes his mother. “I’m a small town girl,” said Hackney, who added that she grew up in the little town of Oakwood and considers Champaign “the big city,” which she traverses only when necessary, for her aerobics classes, grocery shopping and appointments. Terry, who works for the telephone company ATT-SBC, got married about a year ago and finished his bachelor’s degree in June. Hackney’s daughter, Sherry Cler, works at Bergner’s, and her husband, Greg, is the mayor of Tolono and runs a car repair business. They have three sons and three grandchildren. Daily phone calls also keep Hackney connected to her brother, who lives in St. Louis, and whom she visits when she can.
Retirement offers Walker more time for helping others

By Sharita Forrest

F

or Robert Walker Jr., a
soldier who joined the
U.S. Army straight out
of high school, Vietnam
was a life-changing experience.
A demolitions expert specializing
in booby traps, Walker had gradu-
ated a seminary course in Cham-
paign Centennial High School and
was granted leave to return home to
graduate with his class and ac-
cept his diploma in person. Amid
the horrors of war, Walker made
a pact with God: If he were al-
lowed to go home alive, he would
devote his life to serving God and
helping people who couldn’t help
themselves.

In the more than 30 years since
he made that pact, Walker has
done that through the National
Council of African American
Men, a nonprofit organization that
coordinates and works in partner-
ship with other organizations to
address issues that impact Afri-
can-American men and to pro-
mote their positive contributions
to society. Walker is a co-founder
of the Illinois-chartered chapter
of NCAAM and, chairman of the
board of directors, oversees the
chapters throughout Illinois.

His retirement from the UI
Facilities and Services Divi-
sion on Nov. 1, 2006, has offered
Walker the opportunity to devote
himself more fully to NCAAM, which
is an expert archer and marksman,
A trainer in kung fu, Walker also
nothing like Mother Nature to
soothe your soul,” said Walker,
and added that being in the wil-
derness relieves him of any ten-
sion he feels and renews his faith.
He also is a member of American
Legion Post 559.

Role model

Robert Walker was a steamfitter supervisor in the
Facilities and Services Division for 30 years. Walker’s retirement
has given him more time to devote to activities with the National
Council of African American Men, an organization that addresses
issues facing African American men and promotes the positive
contributions that they make to their communities. “Our children
need us desperately — our guidance, our encouragement to grow, and
to know there’s a better song for us to live,” Walker said.

Carl W. Hatcher, 82, died Oct. 31 at Carle
Foundation Hospital in Urbana. He was an
assistant tree surgeon for Facilities and
Services from 1953-1966. Memorials: Sci-
ner’s Children’s Hospital, 2211 N. Oak
Park Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60707.

Mary L. House, 82, died Oct. 29 at Carle
Foundation Hospital in Urbana. She was
a maid at the Illini Union from 1966 until her

Alvan R. Gilmore died April 24. He was
a professor emeritus of forestry, retiring in
1964.

David F. Linowes, 90, died Oct. 29 at his
home in Chevy Chase, Md. He was the
Breschenstein Professor of Political Econ-
omy and Public Policy at the UI from 1976
to 1987 when he became professor emeri-
tus. He continued working on campus until
June 2000. Memorials: UI Foundation or
Adas Israel Congregation in Washington,
D.C.

Virginia Ann Sherman, 46, died Oct. 31 at
the Carle Arbours in Savoy. She was a sec-
retary IV in the music department for seven
years, until her death. Memorials: Ginny
Sherman Memorial Student Scholarship
in care of the UI Foundation, Harper Hall,
MC-386 or the American Cancer Society.

Larry J. Smith, 51, died Nov. 6 at Kirby
Hospital in Monticello. He worked in the
grounds department for 23 years. Memori-
als: The Nature Conservatory.

Joelene M. Tipsward, 67, died Oct. 29 at her
home in Carlin. She had been an account-
tant II in the department of electrical and
computer engineering since 1986. Memori-
als: American Cancer Society (Vermilion
County chapter) for lung cancer.

James Winters, 55, died Nov. 3 at Pro-
tor Hospital in Pontiac. He was a distribu-
tion assistant for American Information Tech-
nology Services at the UI from 1986-1997.
Memorials may be made to the family
through Lex, Memorial Chapel, Rantoul.

Memorials

A memorial service for Judy Alice McKin-
ney will be at 11 a.m. Dec. 1 at the Bond-
ville United Methodist Church, Bondville.
McKinney, 59, died Oct. 25 at her Cham-
paign home. She was an account technician
at the Krammert Center for the Performing
Arts. Memorials: Central Illinois Emmaus
or Bondville United Methodist Church.

Ad removed for online version
Benefits of online interaction for teens outweigh danger

By Craig Chamberlain
News Bureau Staff Writer

I t's there such a thing as being too safe on the Internet? One UI education researcher believes there is, at least when teenagers are concerned.

Illinois reports war of online predators, hate groups and other “digital dangers” lurking in online social spaces, and those dangers are not to be taken lightly, says Brendeshia Tynes, a professor of educational psychology and African American studies at Illinois.

“But we may do adolescents a disservice when we curtail their participation in these spaces, because the educational and psychosocial benefits of this type of communication can far outweigh the potential dangers,” Tynes wrote in an essay titled “Internet Safety Gone Wild?” appearing in this month’s issue of the Journal of Adolescent Research.

In online discussions, teenagers have the opportunity to develop critical thinking and argumentation skills, Tynes said. They can find support from online peer groups, explore questions of identity, get help with homework, and ask questions about sensitive issues they might be afraid to ask in person. They can develop their skills in understanding issues from the perspective of others.

In many circumstances, the same anonymity that parents and educators often find so threatening about certain online sites and spaces is actually a benefit, she said.

In particular, that can be true with issues of race and ethnicity, which Tynes has found in her research to be “very much a common theme” in adolescents’ online discussions. In one of her studies, focused on open-topic chat rooms, she found that race was mentioned in 38 of 39 discussions.

Tynes knows from her research and that of others that hate groups are online and proliferating. Added to that is the racial or ethnic insensitivity to be found routinely in many online conversations, Tynes said.

“That being said, I also think that there are myriad positive outcomes that are related to interracial interaction online,” she said.

Some teenagers who believe racism no longer exists may readily find it in online discussions. Tynes said. Some may spread false information or make insensitive remarks, but find themselves challenged, she said. Others may find the online environment a place to ask serious questions about race or ethnicity they would be afraid to ask in person, for fear of offending or causing a conflict, Tynes said.

In all of these cases, there is an opportunity to learn or gain a new perspective, she said. “It’s sort of like having training wheels for engaging in intercultural discussions (offline),” Tynes said.

Given the increasing segregation of U.S. schools along racial lines, Tynes thinks schools may even want to encourage online discussion as a substitute for those of their homes, and as a training ground for teens preparing to enter the adult social world.

Illinois could weather recession better than nation

By Jan Dennis
News Bureau Staff Writer

I linois could weather recession better than the nation if the sagging U.S. economy plunges into a recession and a worrysome housing market slump and sub-prime loan crisis, a UI economist says.

“A recession in 2007 or early 2008 might have a relatively light impact on the state since real estate problems are not as severe here as in several other states,” economics professor J. Fred Giertz said. “Illinois has also not suffered as much as Michigan from the slowdown in the automotive industry.”

The state’s travel industry, a vital cog in the Chicago-area economy, also remains strong, in contrast to the nation’s lasting recession in 2001 when terrorism fears caused a sharp decline, said Giertz, the interim head of the UI economics department.

Giertz doubts dire forecasts by some analysts that the nation’s sluggish economy will lapse into a recession, instead agreeing with other observers who predict the slowdown will end with “a soft landing, not a crash.”

“Experts are notoriously inaccurate about predicting recessions. The old joke is that forecasters have predicted six of the last two recessions,” said Giertz, a professor in the Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

Giertz says recessions have occurred about once every 10 years over the last three decades. The nation’s economy is ending its sixth year of expansion since the 2001 recession, a recovery that weathered terrorism worries, natural disasters, corporate accounting scandals and a slowdown in the auto industry.

“That question now is whether the economy can do the same with the sub-prime loans and housing market problems. The odds are that we will, but it’s not a slam dunk,” Giertz said.

Because of sometimes-conflicting economic data, experts are divided over the prospects of another recession. Sales of existing homes slid 19 percent in September, for example, while new home sales logged a surprising 4.8 percent increase.

Giertz says recessions are not only hard to predict, but that it’s sometimes just as hard to tell when the economy is really in one. The nation’s last recession began in March 2001, but a government agency that determines when recessions begin and end did not determine the economy was actually in one until late November 2001.

“By that time, the recession had ended and the economy was expanding again,” Giertz said.

Giertz says the last three recessions have had varied impact in Illinois, which was harder-hit than the nation in 1980-81, but fared relatively well in 1990. The 2001 recession again had a more severe impact, he said, with the state recovering more slowly than the rest of the country.
A report on honors, awards, appointments and other outstanding achievements of faculty and staff members

agricultural, consumer and environmental sciences

Michael Grossman, professor emeritus of animal science, was honored as the first Wageningen Institute of Animal Sciences Honorary Fellow in a ceremony at Wageningen University in the Netherlands on Oct. 8. Grossman was recognized “for his many and valauble contributions to the training of Ph.D. students.”

engineering

Harry Hilton, professor emeritus of aerospace engineering, has been invited to present a one-hour keynote lecture at the Mechanics of Time Dependent Materials Conference in Monterey, Calif., March 30-April 4. The title of the paper is “Gen- eralized Viscoelastic Designer Functionally Graded Auxetic Materials Engineered/ Tailored for Specific Task Performances.” Students Daniel H. Lee and Abdul Rahman A. El Fouly are co-authors.

fine and applied arts

Robert I. Selby, professor of architecture, received the Nathan Clifford Ricker Award from the American Institute of Archi- tects on Nov. 1 in St. Charles. The award, named for the first person to graduate from a university program in architecture in the U.S., is the organization’s highest award for educators. Selby also received the Cen- tral Illinois Outstanding Educators Award and Excellence in Architectural Education Award on Oct. 25 in Bloomington, Ill.

liberal arts and sciences

May Berenbaum, professor and head of entomology, and Gene E. Robinson, the G. William Arends Professor of Integrative Biology, director of the Neuroscience Program, and professor of entomology, were featured in the PBS special, “Silence of the Bees” that was broadcast last month on “Nature.” The one-hour program was about disappearing honey bees.

Roman Boulatov, professor of chemistry, received a three-year research grant from the Air Force Young Investigator Pro- gram. He proposed to “develop new meth- ods to acquire chemomechanical param- eters of diverse chemical reactions.” The Air Force Office of Scientific Research will award $9.5 million in grants to 29 scientists and engineers who submitted winning prop- osals.

John Hartwig, professor of chemistry, will receive the 2007 Mukaiyama Award from the Society of Synthetic Organic Chemistry, Japan. The award is given annu- ally to eminent independent researchers in the area of organic synthesis and synthetic methodology. Hartwig will receive the award and give a lecture in September 2008 at the Mount Aso highlands of Kyushu, Ja- pan.

Gregory Miller, professor of psychology, was appointed a Richard and Margaret Romano Professorial Scholar based upon recognition of outstanding achievements in his research. Miller has become a key leader in the advancement of psychology at the UI.

Christina White, professor of chemis- try, has been selected to receive the 2007 Eli Lilly Grant. This award comes with a two- year unrestricted research grant of $100,000. White will give a lecture at the 14th Bienn- ial Lilly Grantee Symposium to be held in Indianapolis in early March 2010.
By Andrea Lynn
News Bureau Staff Writer

The World Series may be over, but the echo of baseball’s deep past is very much in the air in LeAnne Howe’s new novel, “Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story” (Aunt Lute Books).

Yet Howe, a citizen of the Choktaw Nation of Oklahoma and an English professor at the UI, delivers more than echoes in her heavily researched work of fiction. She makes the turn-of-the-century games in Indian Territory vivid, palpable.

Indeed, Howe, the interim director of Illinois’ new American Indian Studies program, fast-tracks the sights, sounds, feel, taste and even whiff, of the real pitches the sights, sounds, feel, taste and even whiff, of the real thing, the big-bang of American baseball as it was in the beginning and as it was played on the dusty Cherokees, Chickasaws and Choctaws diamonds in its heyday, 1895 to 1915.

The book is Howe’s homage to the game’s role in Native American life. Readers will learn from her American Indian characters that “playing ball is in the blood,” her American Indian characters that “playing ball is in the blood,” and not just baseball.

Howe’s novel is picking up early praise as an epic battle that involved baseball. And much more.

For on Nov. 16, 1907, in fact, Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory would be “legislated out of existence,” Howe writes. With the creation of the state of Oklahoma and the privatization of tribal lands, everything changes. Indians will be written out of Oklahoma’s picture of history.

Whether in fiction, poetry, non-fiction or filmmaking, Howe has devoted her writings to the Native American experience, Howe has devoted her writings to the Native American experience, whether in fiction, poetry, non-fiction or filmmaking.

Native American experience

LeAnne Howe has devoted her writings to the Native American experience, whether in fiction, poetry, non-fiction or filmmaking. She weaves fact and fiction into her new novel, “Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story.”

Howe’s latest work, “Miko Kings,” came to her in a series of dreams when she was finishing the book described Howe as “a Native American writer of aggressive political and stylized prose. (Her) narrative defies easy categorization: It is her mission is clear: to elevate this sports footnote into the position of prominence it deserves.”

Howe weaves fact and fiction, future, past and present, water and light, fire and earth, world traveling and time traveling, multiple names and multiple identities, conscious states, dream states and morphine-drip states, and Christian and traditional religions.

Her story is built with structural oddments, as well, and again, both true and fictive: diary entries, newspaper articles, photographic historical records, poems and songs, and several major narratives. Some of the characters are based on historical figures, but once again, fact and fiction are so tightly woven, that the threads can’t be separated.

Ada, Okla., “Indian Territory’s queen city,” is the book’s main setting, but the author cuts back and forth through several time periods there and elsewhere: from 2006 to 1896. Ultimately, all the major players converge, sharing endings and beginnings that surprise, disturb and awe. They are intimately linked by the motion of story,” Howe said.

1907 is the key year, the pivot of all the narration. The book opens in Ada, Okla., “Indian Territory’s queen city,” is the book’s main setting, but the author cuts back and forth through several time periods there and elsewhere: from 2006 to 1896. Ultimately, all the major players converge, sharing endings and beginnings that surprise, disturb and awe. They are intimately linked by the motion of story,” Howe said.

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UI scientist does nutritional detective work in Botswana

By Phyllis Picklesimer
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Many Americans have a soft spot for Botswana. Some developed that fondness for the African country while reading the best-selling "The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency" series. But few have had a chance to do any sleuthing of their own there.

That changed when UI scientist Karen Chapman-Novakofski acquired a doctoral student from Botswana and learned how few data existed about the health and nutrition of that country's elderly.

"In Botswana, which has the highest incidence of AIDS of any African country, the aged are often raising many grandchildren whose parents have died from the disease. So the elderly’s good health is very important," Chapman-Novakofski said.

The two traveled to Africa and set up shop in front of post offices on the days the elderly received their pension checks and questioned them about their eating habits.

The results of their research have helped policy makers in Botswana and were published in the November/December issue of the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior. The article also has been selected for inclusion in a special issue of that journal focusing on world poverty.

"The information that we gathered will support changes in the country's nutrition policy," Chapman-Novakofski said.

For example, persons living in urban areas had more access to fruits and vegetables than their rural counterparts. "And, in a pattern that also occurs in the West, single, widowed and elderly females consumed less meat and fruit than elderly men and married people," she said.

Eating vegetables was more common if older persons had children in their homes, also a Western behavior, she said. "As a rule, people make an effort to prepare more nutritious meals if children also are eating them."

The frequent role of the elderly as caregivers of their grandchildren makes it all the more necessary that government policy makers promote good health and nutrition among that group, Chapman-Novakofski said.

"Although, as a researcher, the amazing thing to me was that the people we interviewed were as old and as mobile as they were. Most had walked to the post office to get their pension," she said.

"Many live to be 80 or 90, yet they're obviously not eating the five fruits and vegetables a day that we recommend. They may not be in robust good health, yet they seem to be healthy enough, especially in a country that has severe infectious disease," she said.

"So there may be other factors that promote their longevity, which is an interesting area for further research," she said.

As people in Botswana begin to adopt Western consumption patterns, "they’ll have the challenge of promoting good eating habits while avoiding some of the bad habits that we have, such as overconsumption of fats and calories," she said.

Chapman-Novakofski's research also was published in the Journal of Nutrition for the Elderly. Both articles were co-written by Maruapula. Partial funding was provided by the UI, the University of Botswana, and the Norwegian Council of Universities/Centre for International University Cooperation.
Center offers strategic business improvement solutions

By Sharita Forrest
Assistant Editor

C ompanies and engineers in the Chicago area now have greater access to the expertise and innovation offered by faculty members and students at the UI’s Urbana campus through educational programs, training and consulting services offered at a satellite facility in Naperville.

The Naperville Center is home to UI Business and Industry Services, a consulting group supported by UI Extension that helps organizations grow and thrive by offering companywide strategic business improvement solutions.

Beginning this semester, the College of Engineering began offering for-credit graduate programs in engineering and computer science at the UI’s Naperville Center, at 1100 E. Warrenville Road. Bruce Vojak, associate dean of engineering for external affairs, coordinated the initiative.

“We’re problem solvers, whether a business needs help with a culture change, developing a global strategy, improving efficiencies or innovating with new products,” said Mary Rose Hennessy, BIS executive director. BIS instructors and consultants offer expertise in those areas as well as in human resources, and continuous process improvement and quality system implementation. Additionally, BIS offers certification in information technology and training in executive leadership, software and basic and technical skills.

“Many companies are frustrated because they don’t know how to access the brilliance and talent here at the university, and that’s one of our goals: to serve as a bridge between the university and the hundreds of companies who would love to have access to its people,” Hennessy said.

Companies are asking for help linking market needs to research opportunities on campus and want to meet with scholars at Illinois, Hennessy said. BIS is helping link engineering faculty members with various manufacturing companies to assist in the design and development of products, helping promote student design projects to manufacturers, and is connecting students in the master of business administration degree programs in the College of Business with companies for market research opportunities and internships as well as faculty-led courses that study various companies.

BIS also promotes the UI’s MBA program offered in Chicago and the Career Services Programs offered by the colleges of Engineering and Business.

Beginning Jan. 11, BIS will offer a Global Strategy Certificate program to help businesses take advantage of, and profit from, growth opportunities in the global environment.

Currently, there are 32,000 Illinois graduates in DuPage County, and there is great need for graduate-level engineering courses, certificates and degrees in that geographic area. This fall, the College of Engineering began offering five certificate programs as well as a master of computer science degree program at the Naperville Center. The Technology Entrepreneur Center, an interdisciplinary unit within the college, began offering a graduate certificate program in Strategic Technology Management at Naperville this fall as well.

“This is really giving our College of Engineering alumni and other engineers the opportunity to learn about the business side of what they’re doing without having to get a full MBA or master’s degree,” said Rhamoun Clifton, TEC’s assistant director. “We try, in as few hours as possible, to give them the basics of finance, sales, management and strategy so they can start their own ventures or serve as leaders in whatever company they’re working in.” The certificates typically require six to eight credit hours, including fundamental courses and electives that allow students to develop expertise in areas of their choice.

TEC has offered its certificates on campus and online through Continuing Engineering Education for the past several years. About 40 people around the world have completed the STM certificate online since the program began, and the TEC has had a total of 585 students since it began offering courses in the 2002 fall semester. Enrollment fluctuates with the time of year, but typically ranges from as few as four students to as many as 20 students per program, Clifton said.

BIS is working with TEC to form a consortium to ensure minimum enrollment for the Business Management for Engineers program and will work with other units interested in boosting enrollment in the programs they offer at the Naperville Center.

The BIS facility has two state-of-the-art computer labs and executive-level training rooms and offers video conferencing, live teaching, online and blended learning. BIS occupies about 14,000 square feet at the Naperville Center and is expanding by another 10,000 square feet to accommodate graduate credit offerings. BIS, which began its partnership with Illinois in October 2006, previously was affiliated with Northern Illinois University for 15 years.

Over its 24-year history, BIS has assisted more than 6,000 organizations – including industry leaders such as McDonald’s, Ernst and Young, and BorgWarner Transmission Systems – and is working with some of the fastest-growing companies in Illinois. During its fiscal year 2006, BIS provided consulting and training to 562 organizations and 6,598 employees in the state of Illinois.

By Sharita Forrest
Assistant Editor

BIS-ness as usual

Mary Rose Hennessy is the executive director of Business and Industry Services, a unit based in Naperville that provides consulting and customized training services to Illinois businesses. BIS, which is supported by UI Extension, has a staff of more than 40 experts and has helped more than 6,000 organizations during its 24 years of service.

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NEW faces 2007

Among the newcomers to the Urbana campus this fall were more than 7,500 freshmen and about 100 tenure/tenure track faculty members whose appointments began this summer or fall. Inside Illinois continues its tradition of introducing some of the new faculty members on campus and will feature at least two new colleagues in each fall issue.

BRANT HOUSTON, Knight Chair for Investigative and Enterprise Reporting
College of Communications

Education: B.A. (English literature), Bennington College
Teaching at Illinois: “Investigative Reporting” (JOUR 480); Houston will eventually teach Reporting 1 and 2 in addition to investigative reporting.
Research: “Brant is particularly interested in creating an international network of investigative training programs for journalists worldwide,” said Walt Harrington, head of the department of journalism. “He is also interested in developing programs to support the burgeoning ethnic press in the U.S. Brant’s specialty is computer-assisted reporting. A new edition of his “Investigative Reporter’s Handbook” – the bible of investigative journalism methods – will soon be published by Bedford/St. Martin’s.

Brant Houston is the most distinguished teacher of investigative journalism in the country and probably the world. He’s the best of the best, and we’re excited and honored that he has joined our journalism faculty. His presence reinforces and enhances our department’s long-standing public affairs journalism tradition and the influence of our Knight Chair,” Harrington said.

JOZEF KOKINI, Bingham Professor of Food Engineering and associate dean for research
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Education: Ph.D. and M.S. (chemical engineering), Carnegie-Mellon University; B.S. (chemical engineering), Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey
Teaching at Illinois: Graduate seminar (FSHN 597)
Research: Kokini’s area of research is the study of the rheological properties of foods, particularly of carbohydrates and proteins. In the past several years, he has built capacity in his lab to use nanotechnology tools to study the properties of food systems, said Faye M. Dong, professor and head of the department of food science and human nutrition.

“Dr. Kokini brings a wealth of expertise to our department,” Dong said. “Examples are the application of nanotechnology tools to the study of food systems, which is a ‘hot topic’ and developing area in the food industry, with applications in food quality, nutritional value and food safety, his model leadership skills and the ability to work in interdisciplinary fields and his superb teaching and mentoring skills.”

Kokini has been recognized nationally and internationally for his work. Most recently, he was elected to the International Food Academy of Food Science and Technology.

Nov. 15, 2007
Inside Illinois
PAGE 11
**brief notes**

**University YWCA**

**Holiday gifts for sale Dec. 1**

The University YWCA is sponsoring its third annual Holiday Market from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 1 at the Urbana Civic Center. The market will feature an assortment of holiday gift ideas from local artists, crafters and home-based businesses. Shoppers may choose from a variety of jewelry, gourmet foods, skin-care products, candles, Lucinda Pins, gift baskets and more.

A children’s corner, sponsored by Steve Tarrant, State Farm Insurance Agency and the YWCA Student Leadership Panel, will entertain kids with crafts and coloring contests. Santa will visit from noon-2 p.m. Food will be available for purchase and admission is free.

**Origins of Modernity**

**History of the book explored**

History professor Adrian Johns, University of Chicago, will present a lecture titled “Pharmaceuticals and Origins of Modernity: Adulteration, Piracy and Credit in the Early Enlightenment” at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 29 in the Plym auditorium, Temple Buell Hall.

“One of the central assumptions in modern life is trust in materials, a belief that what we purchase, consume, drink, and eat is authentic, is what it purports to be,” Johns said. “I will approach our need for confidence, especially in pharmaceuticals, from a historical point of view and show how our reliance upon ‘patented’ medications has some unintended consequences.”

Johns is the author of “The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making,” which won the Leo Gershoy Award of the American Historical Association, the John Ben Snow Prize of the North American Conference on British Studies, the Louis Gottschalk Prize of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies and the SHARP Prize for best work on the history of the authorship, reading and publishing. Johns is currently working on a history of intellectual piracy from the invention of printing to the Internet.

**Spurlock Museum**

**Discovery of Archaea featured**

Spurlock Museum will host “Uncovering Life’s Third Domain: The Discovery of the Archaea” through Jan. 27 in the Campbell Lobby of the museum. The exhibit showcases some of the original tools used by professor Carl R. Woese, 2003 recipient of the Crafoord Prize, and the team of scientists at the UI who conducted groundbreaking work in the use of molecular signatures to map the evolutionary history of life. The work of this team led to the discovery of the Archaea, the third domain of life.

The exhibit is presented in collaboration with the Institute for Genomic Biology and in with the conference “Hidden Before Our Eyes: 30 Years of Molecular Phylogeny, Archaea and Evolution,” that was on campus Nov. 3-4.

**Kranne Art Museum**

**Student exhibition is Dec. 6**

Exploring the contemporary politics of beauty, race and representation, graduate students from multiple UI programs (advertising, communications, English, education policy studies, kinesiology, Spanish and theater) will display their semesterlong interdisciplinary art projects from 6-8 p.m. Dec. 6 at the CRL Gallery of the Kranne Museum.

More than 15 art pieces, ranging in techniques from jewelry making to performance to digital art, examine the relationships between race, gender, sexuality and popular culture. The exhibit provocatively asks how the gendered and raced body is defined, disciplined, classified and ultimately consumed as ugly/beautiful or undesirably by diverse publics.

Admission is free and the Kranne Art Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information, contact Isabel Molina at imolina@uiuc.edu or 244-1419. ◆

**Chefs rise to challenge**

Brothers Kevin Peterson, left, and Eric Peterson, both cooks at Illinois Street Residence Halls, work on their team’s menu during the fourth Chef’s Challenge on Nov. 8.

Hosted by University Housing Dining Services in the Illinois Street Residence Halls’ dining room, the event awarded three employees a three-day workshop at the Culinary Institute of America in Greystone, Calif. The winning team was coach Carrie Knox (production chef at Peabody Dining Hall), Haarro Barrante, kitchen helper; and Katisha Williams, snack bar attendant (both at Gregory Drive Dining Hall). They competed against six other teams of residence hall and Illini Union dining staff members.

The teams were challenged to create their most innovative and tasty menu that included this year’s main ingredient – noodles – in front of a student audience. Celebrity judges David Martin (formerly on Bravo TV’s “Top Chef”) and Jet Tila (Food Network, “The Learning Channel, HGTV and PBS) joined Renee Romano, vice chancellor for student affairs, with the Institute for Genomic Biology and in with the conference “Hidden Before Our Eyes: 30 Years of Molecular Phylogeny, Archaea and Evolution,” that was on campus Nov. 3-4.

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Nov. 15, 2007

Much of this information is drawn from the online Campus Calendars on the UI Web site at www.uiuc.edu/calendar. Other calendar entries should be sent 15 days before the desired publication date to insideill@illinois.edu. More information is available from Marty Yeakel at 333-1085.

calendar of events

Nov 15 to Dec 9

lecture

15 Friday


16 Thursday


1 Saturday

“Mysteries of the Cold Uni-verse.” Smitha Vaidyeshwara. UI. 10:15-11:30 a.m. 141 Loomis Laboratory. Saturday Physics Honors Program.

2 Sunday


16 Thursday


18 Friday


19 Thursday


15 Friday


19 Thursday


15 Friday


19 Thursday


15 Friday


19 Thursday

more calendar of events
CALENDAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

more calendar of events
the Humanities
sports
To confirm times, go to www.fightingillini.com

17 Saturday Football. UI vs. Northwestern University. 2 p.m. Assembly Hall.
18 Sunday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. Southern Illinois University. 2 p.m. Assembly Hall.
23 Friday Volleyball. UI vs. University of Minnesota. 7 p.m. Huff Hall.
24 Saturday Volleyball. UI vs. University of Iowa. 7 p.m. Huff Hall.

1 Saturday Men’s Basketball. UI vs. Wake State. 4 p.m. Assembly Hall.
2 Sunday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Illinois-Chicago. 2 p.m. Assembly Hall.

5 Wednesday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 8 p.m. Assembly Hall.
6 Thursday Men’s Basketball. UI vs. UI vs. Women’s Basketball. 8 p.m. Assembly Hall.
7 Saturday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 6 p.m. Assembly Hall.
8 Sunday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Illinois-Chicago. 2 p.m. Assembly Hall.
9 Monday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 5 p.m. Assembly Hall.
10 Tuesday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Illinois-Chicago. 2 p.m. Assembly Hall.
11 Wednesday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 8 p.m. Assembly Hall.
12 Thursday Men’s Basketball. UI vs. UI vs. Women’s Basketball. 8 p.m. Assembly Hall.
13 Friday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 5 p.m. Assembly Hall.
14 Saturday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 6 p.m. Assembly Hall.
15 Sunday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Illinois-Chicago. 2 p.m. Assembly Hall.
16 Monday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 5 p.m. Assembly Hall.
17 Tuesday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 8 p.m. Assembly Hall.
18 Wednesday Women’s Basketball. UI vs. University of Oklahoma. 5 p.m. Assembly Hall.
19 Thursday Men’s Basketball. UI vs. UI vs. Women’s Basketball. 8 p.m. Assembly Hall.
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Researchers simulate photosynthesis and design a better leaf

By Diana Yates
News Bureau Staff Writer

Researchers have built a better plant, one that produces more leaves and fruit without needing extra fertilizer. The researchers accomplished the feat using a computer model that mimics the process of evolution. Theirs is the first model to simulate every step of the photosynthetic process.

The research findings appear in the October issue of Plant Physiology, and were presented Nov. 9 at the BIO-Asia 2007 Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. The research was sponsored by the National Science Foundation.

Photosynthesis converts light energy into chemical energy in plants, algae, phytoplankton and some species of bacteria and archaea. Photosynthesis in plants involves an elaborate array of chemical reactions requiring dozens of protein enzymes and other chemical components. Most photosynthesis occurs in a plant’s leaves.

“The question we wanted to ask was, ‘Can we do better than the plant, in terms of productivity?’” said principal investigator Steve Long, a professor of plant biology and crop sciences at Illinois.

It wasn’t feasible to tackle this question with experiments on actual plants, Long said. With more than 100 proteins involved in photosynthesis, testing one protein at a time would require an enormous investment of time and money.

“But now that we have the photosynthetic process ‘in silico,’ we can test all possible permutations on the supercomputer,” he said.

The researchers first had to build a reliable model of photosynthesis, one that would accurately mimic the photosynthetic response to changes in the environment. This formidable task relied on the computational resources available at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

Xin-Guang Zhu, a research scientist at the center and in plant biology, worked with Long and Eric de Sturler, formerly a specialist in computational mathematics in computer sciences at Illinois, to realize this model.

After determining the relative abundance of each of the proteins involved in photosynthesis, the researchers created a series of linked differential equations, each mimicking a single photosynthetic step. The team tested and adjusted the model until it successfully predicted the outcome enzymes conducted on real leaves, including their dynamic response to environmental variation.

The researchers then programmed the model to randomly alter levels of individual enzymes in the photosynthetic process.

Before a crop plant, like wheat, produces grain, most of the nitrogen it takes in goes into the photosynthetic proteins. “The question we wanted to ask, was, ‘Can we do better than the plant, in terms of productivity?’” said principal investigator Steve Long, a professor of plant biology and crop sciences.

Using “evolutionary algorithms,” which mimic evolution by selecting for desirable traits, the model hunted for enzymes that – if increased – would enhance plant productivity. If higher concentrations of an enzyme relative to others improved photosynthetic efficiency, the model used the results of that experiment as a parent for the next generation of tests.

This process identified several proteins that could, if present in higher concentrations relative to others, greatly enhance the productivity of the plant. The new findings are consistent with results from other researchers, who found that increases in one of these proteins in transgenic plants increased productivity.

“By rearranging the investment of nitrogen, we could almost double efficiency,” Long said.

An obvious question that stems from the research is why plant productivity can be increased so much, Long said. Why haven’t plants already evolved to be as efficient as possible?

“The answer may lie in the fact that evolution selects for survival and fecundity, while we were selecting for increased productivity,” he said. The changes suggested in the model might undermine the survival of a plant living in the wild, he said, “but our analyses suggest they will be viable in the farmer’s field.”

Long also is the deputy director of the Energy Biosciences Institute and an affiliate of the Institute for Genomic Biology and the supercomputing center.

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