Illinois governor pushes ‘green’ initiatives in campus visit

By Sharita Forrest
News Editor

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn joined UI officials at the Business Instructional Facility on the Urbana campus on Feb. 18 to celebrate the signing of the Sustainable University Compact, which is an effort by colleges and universities to cut the amount of carbon and other emissions they produce.

Herman said that the compact is one of many components of the UI’s long-range plan to combat climate change through eco-friendly policies, curricula and research.

One of the first universities to institute a required environmental course, the UI has several of the initiatives on the compact under way, such as storm water management projects, and promoting sustainable transportation and reducing emissions through the use of hybrid and electric vehicles and through a recently begun car-sharing program.

Herman’s sustainability goals for the Urbana campus include reducing the energy consumption of existing buildings by 10 percent within three years and rolling back usage to 1990 standards. An Energy Policy Plan for the campus, adopted last year, is raising awareness about energy consumption and sustainability, and aims to shift energy generation to renewable resources.

Campus, cities prepare for ‘Unofficial’ event

By Sharita Forrest
Assistant Editor

U
fficials and police are working with campus agencies, and city and state officials to keep a lid on Unofficial St. Patrick’s Day, a commercial event that is planned for March 6. Although the event is not condoned by UI officials, they have spent weeks in planning with city officials, police agencies and state liquor agents to ensure the safety of students and faculty and staff members, to prevent damage to university property and to prevent disruptions to campus operations and academic instruction.

Past years’ celebrations resulted in significant property damage in the Lincoln Hall theater and Foellinger Auditorium and led to the death of a UI alumna who fell from a motorcycle in 2006.

“It is a $30,000 overtime pay during the event, the UI, the cities of Champaign and the Urbana State Police – spent more than $30,000 in overtime pay during the event, Chancellor Richard Herman wrote in a letter to undergraduate students’ parents that also is posted on his Web page. Herman urged parents to talk with their children about personal safety and to encourage their students to act in the best interests of the university.

Police and university staff members plan to increase patrols around campus buildings and in Campusowntown during the event, focusing on safeguarding people and property, and paying particular attention to large lecture halls such as Foellinger Auditorium that sustained damage in the past.

Police and university staff members who support us will be bolder because there is nothing going on,” said Peg Rawles, associate chancellor. “That would be a really good result. We plan to make this event as uneventful as possible.”

This year, the event was being promoted over the social networking site Facebook as well as by word of mouth, although university officials, city officials and police are hoping that strict enforcement will discourage large numbers of non-UI students from traveling to campus to participate. Many of the arrests and problematic behaviors during past Unofficial celebrations were students from other colleges, said UI police Lt. Skip Frost.

“UNOFFICIAL,” Page 4

Virus or not?

When a parasitic wasp lays its eggs in a caterpillar, it also transfers a virus. But researchers say an examination of this virus DNA may change the definition of what a virus is.

On the Web:
www.standingupforillinois.org/green/colleges_uni.php

Photo by L. Brian Stauffer

Stig Lassenholm

Green business

By Sharita Forrest

Pragnathus called the UI the “epicenter of research” and the Business Instructional Facility during Quinn’s visit on Feb. 18.

In his role as chairman of the Green Governmental Fund, the UI’s signing of the Sustainable University Compact, while Niranjan Shah, chair of the UI Board of Trustees looks on. The agreement outlines several initiatives that the UI is undertaking to make its environment cleaner and greener. The UI signed the compact at the Business Instructional Facility during Quinn’s visit on Feb. 18.

One of the first universities to institute a required environmental course, the UI has several of the initiatives on the compact under way, such as storm water management projects, and promoting sustainable transportation and reducing emissions through the use of hybrid and electric vehicles and through a recently begun car-sharing program.

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Herman also pledged to develop a plan for achieving carbon neutrality when he signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment last year.

The Business Instructional Facility is the first building at the Urbana campus that will be certified through the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – rating system. The $60 million-plus facility, which opened for classes Aug. 25, features rooftop solar panels and drought-resistant plantings that provide insulation and reduce water runoff.

Since Quinn created the Illinois Sustainable University Compact three years ago in his role as chairman of the Green Governments Coordinating Council, 65 Illinois universities and community colleges have adopted it.

Details about the Sustainable University Compact are available on Quinn’s Web site: www.standingupforillinois.org/green/colleges_uni.php.

Photo by L. Brian Stauffer

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

I n t e r n a t i o n a l

March 5, 2009
Vol. 28, No. 15
Stimulus package offers funding opportunities

By Sharita Forrest

The $787 billion-dollar federal economic stimulus package recently signed by President Barack Obama contains significant funding for agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, Provoost Linda Katehi urged researchers at the Urbana-Champaign senate – be added to the APC as voting members – one from each campus Office of Public Affairs, administered by the Illinois Senate on a path to failure because we were budgets of three campuses that would let it succeed. Global Campus might be elected and hinder its progress.

While White supported the formation of academic faculty committees, he did not find White's support for Global Campus and wanted apathy. The Illinois State Journal-Register acknowledged that the new 12-credit credentials, many more like a corporate board of directors than an academic policy committee, that Global Campus is a startup. A startup is fragile and has one job – to survive – and if it survives, then faculty members and academic policy makers need to be strategic about their hiring and let attrition do its work. Very little of what we do fits into 15 minute intervals between classes, we would have to drop a couple of classes. That's a 15-minute class with a 15-minute break. If we go to a 60-minute class with a 15-minute break, we would have to drop a couple of classes. That's a 15-minute class with a 15-minute break.

The APC recommended that three un- dergraduate programs instead, Katehi said. "Very little of what we do fits into 15 minute intervals between classes, we would have to drop a couple of classes. That's a 15-minute class with a 15-minute break. If we go to a 60-minute class with a 15-minute break, we would have to drop a couple of classes. That's a 15-minute class with a 15-minute break."

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In an article that appeared in the Feb. 19 issue of Inside Illinois, the name of one of the UI units microbiology professor Carl R. Woese is affiliated with was incorrect. Woese, who recently was honored by the American Society for Microbiology with the National Medal of Science, is the senior investigator for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Woese joined the staff in 2002 and worked as a neurologist at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Robin- son joined the staff in 2002 and worked as a neurologist at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Robin-
T

 History, marketing, prejudices of menstrual hygiene products explored

By Shalita Forest
Assistant Editor

Throughout history, in many cultures, menstrual hygiene has been fraught with shame, controversy and misinformation, and has been policed as a debility that served as the basis for denying women equity in education, employment and citizenship.

In her most recent book, “Under Wraps: A History of Menstrual Hygiene Technology” (Lexington Books, 2008), Sharrar Vostral explores the history of menstrual hygiene products and how they can serve as artifacts of control and empowering tools for change.

Although she has been a UI employee for less than a year, Renaé Strawbridge, program administrative assistant, has worked at the Illinois State Geological Survey on campus for more than 28 years.

Strawbridge is a Champion Central High School graduate and Central Illinois native. Prior to joining the survey, she worked in Mahomet, is the mother of a daughter and son, Tiffany and Joshua, and has a grandson, Dominic.

A breast-cancer survivor, Strawbridge was featured in print, radio and television ads for the Carle Cancer Center.

Tell me about your job.

I manage, process and coordinate the inventory for the geological survey. Anything that has to do with equipment, I take care of it. The university defines equipment as an item that has a life expectancy of one year or more, and costs $500 or more. For the survey, that means huge pieces of equipment and little itty-bitty pieces of equipment.

I tag the newly purchased equipment that comes through the door, and facilitate the transfer and movement of all equipment between staff members and our locations throughout the state. Also, I provide back-up administrative services in the ISGS director’s office.

What exactly does the Illinois State Geological Survey do?

We study and map the geology of Illinois. If you want to know what’s underneath what you walk on, the geological survey is the place to come and find out. We study rocks, oil, gas, water, surface water and sub-surface water – anything about the geology of Illinois, we’re the people to ask.

When did the survey become part of the university?

On July 1, 2008, we officially became a division under the Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability at the university. Before then, we were considered an allied agency. We’ve been housed on campus for the past 103 years. Everyone used to say, ‘Oh, you work for the university,’ and I had to say, ‘Technically, I work for the state of Illinois, because we were a state agency until last July. Now we’re all UI employees.’

What’s the most challenging aspect of your job?

Getting people to get rid of obsolete equipment. Because money and equipment are so hard to come by, once our people get a piece of good equipment, they don’t want to let it go.

Our scientific staff still uses equipment that’s 20 to 30 years old. Even though it’s an antique by today’s standards, it’s still usable.

What’s the most enjoyable aspect of your job?

Getting people to get rid of obsolete equipment. Because money and equipment are so hard to come by, once our people get a piece of good equipment, they don’t want to let it go.

What do you like to do off the job?

Right now, I’m studying for my associate’s degree in general studies at Parkland, so that doesn’t leave me time for much else. I’ll complete that in May, and I hope to earn my bachelor’s through Eastern Illinois University. That’s my ultimate goal.

I like to read – for pleasure, not for class. (Laughs.) I like to be with friends and family.

Why general studies?

I don’t have one dominant interest. I like learning about different topics and general studies provided me that opportunity. My goal is to eventually work in an area where I can use my abilities and interests in public speaking and interacting with people.

You were featured in an advertising campaign for cancer survivors. What’s that like?

It’s kind of strange. A friend and I were talking the other night, watching the news, and it came on TV. It stopped me in mid-sentence. I didn’t recognize my voice so much as the words that I said and the introduction to the commercial.

I also participate in a cancer support group. Cancer is not only difficult for the patient, but difficult for the family because they feel helpless. That’s why the support group is important and open to anyone. I’ve had life-changing conversations with people there, and it fulfills a desire in me to give back to my community.

– Interview by Phil Ciciora, News Editor

Life, times of composer Charles Ives re-examined

By Melissa Mitchell
Arts Editor

There’s a book “Charles Ives Reconsidered” (UI Press), musicology professor Gayle Worley Magee (Illinois) wrote that even before his death in 1954, the composer has always had “an unusual, almost cult-like following.”

And he was pleased when his music in mainstream circles gained new fans. The surge in sales of his music albums is an indication that the “American avant-garde,” he said.

But the legacy of Ives, the father – perhaps best known for his decidedly dissonant, polytonal compositions – may not, in fact, match completely with the true biographies of his works. For instance, the music of his teacher, the composer and insurance executive.

“The way he has always been presented since the 1920s, he was uneducated,” he said, “but this is a modernist maverick who was composing on his own, who turned his back on the establishment, on the establishment and what was his own way.”

“His music is basically a fusion of Ives and the history of his music were presented in a new light.”

He had the best possible music education in the 1890s under Horatio Parker at Yale (University). And he was affectionately known as the “underground” composer and an “underground” composer and an “underground” composer.

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“His music is basically a fusion of Ives and the history of his music were presented in a new light.”

The problem with this story is that, as with all narratives, advertising campaigns, it is not completely and exclusively true. Conflicting information has been omitted or downplayed, and other perspectives overemphasized in the process. Gaps – of which there are many – have been filled in using problematic evidence and in keeping with the advo-

She said. “We had the best possible music education in the 1890s under Horatio Parker at Yale (University). And he was affectionately known as the “underground” composer and an “underground” composer. Ives himself is re-

www.illinois.edu
**InsideIllinois**  March 5, 2009

**Ballooning graduate programs look for way to control growth**

By Shanta Forrest  Assistant Editor

With declining state support and increasing numbers of graduate programs, administrators are looking at ways to fund graduate education and to manage enrollment in graduate programs. In the spring semester 2000, there were 7,433 graduate students on campus; this semester, there are 9,050, an increase of 1,617 students, according to the Division of Management Information.

"Our graduate programs are growing and have grown steadily over the past several years," said Richard Wheeler, vice provost. "And we're at a point where growth is not a good thing for the university, so we need to find a way to control that growth."

Some graduate programs have ballooned beyond what units can support, given their resources, their graduation and time-to-degree rates, and other markers of graduate-program quality.

"The challenge facing the campus is how to cover the direct costs of educating graduate students when it is not receiving tuition or other support. Campus administrators are looking for means of empowering the college deans to limit the number of graduate appointments that generate mismatching waivers."

The Fellowship Office of the Graduate College collects tuition or payments in lieu of tuition from external funding agencies that provide it, but "there are several very prestigious fellowship programs that don't, and we don't want to lose those students, so we need to leave enough room in our system to make sure that we can capture those students where possible," Wheeler said.

Many external fellowship funding agencies provide support directly to the student, but provide no funds to the campus unit incurring costs in educating that student.

"Our task is to put together a policy that works better than the one that we have now."

—Richard Wheeler

Likewise, similar problems arise with endowed fellowships, which provide stipends to the students but not to the university. These units that provide classrooms, laboratories, faculty members and other components of their educational experience.

"The real question is: Should we expect donors who are contributing to endowments that will fund graduate fellowships to help cover the cost of educating that student as well as the stipend?" Wheeler said. "We would love to be able to capture some of those costs because the costs are very real. But we're kind of fellowship poor here on campus, and we don't want to discourage people who otherwise could be persuaded to donate a significant amount of money to endowed graduate fellowships."

The committee also is considering closing a loophole with regard to gift funds and private contracts that pay stipends for research assistants but herefore have been exempt from tuition remission to cover the cost of the students' education.

"Over the next few weeks, Wheeler said he and the committee plan to continue discussions with campus units and complete a set of recommendations.

"If there is support for them at that point, then we will move ahead to implementation."

For nearly all students with assistantships and most programs that support their teaching and research with assistantships, the proposed changes will have no effect at all. Every effort has been made to preserve the good work done by the current policies on graduate tuition waivers.

"This process has been extensively consultative. We've tried to provide assurances that we are not out to take away people's waivers. That's just not our task. Our task is to put together a policy that works better than the one that we have now."

Two proposals that were under discussion—one to increase minimum waiver generating assistantship from 25 percent to 33 percent, and a proposal to create a category called "tuition-supported" assistantships that would not generate tuition waivers—have been put on hold and are no longer being considered, Wheeler said.

"The proposal to increase the 25-percent assistantship was strongly opposed by many master's level programs that depend on the support appointment by some students and by the Graduate Employees Organization, which represents many graduate students on campus."

**UNOFFICIAL**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We’re going to have zero-tolerance for any shenanigans—such as open containers of alcohol, fighting, underage consumption of alcohol and students trying to enter any of our large lecture halls intoxicated or carrying cups of liquids,” Frost said. “We’ll be focused on pedestrian safety and on vehicles that are not observing pedestrians’ right of way, but we’ll also be looking for pedestrians and drivers who are under the influence.

“If people choose to participate in this event, that’s fine and it’s their choice as young adults. But if they behave in such a manner that they put themselves or someone else at risk, they’re going to be cited or arrested.”

Enforcement efforts and monitoring of participants’ behavior during last year’s Unofficial, which was held Feb. 28-March 1, resulted in parties being less disruptive than they were during previous years’ celebrations. Many of the temporary city ordinances and university policies implemented last year will be repeated, such as banning visitors from university residence halls, prohibiting Champaign bars from extending their hours and requiring establishments to check patrons’ I.D.s at all doors.

Champaign Mayor Gerald Schweighart recently passed an emergency order that will temporar- ily tighten liquor regulations. The order prohibits patrons under age 21 from entering bars in and near Campustown from 11 a.m. March 6 until 3:30 a.m. March 7.

Additionally, restaurants and bars will not be able to serve shots or pitchers of beer during the event, keg permits will not be is-sued for parties, and it will be il-legal to possess more than one keg per residence. Police will have the authority to shut down package re-sellers if pedestrian traffic at their establishments impedes vehicular traffic.

Officials from the Illinois Liquor Control Commission will be monitoring establishments for li- quor code violations.

Concerned that increased en-forced and restricted entry at li-censed establishments may increase the number of private parties, the Champaign Fire Department plans to monitor balconies at private residences for overcrowding and life-safety violations, in addition to keeping a close watch on crowding at bars.

According to the city of Champa-gin’s Web site, increased enforce- ment paid off last year. Emergency medical assistance calls decreased by 54 percent and 29 from 63 medi-cal calls the prior year.

Last year, police issued 199 No- tices to Appear—9 for minors in possession of alcohol, 73 for pos-session of alcohol on a public way, nine for illegal possession of mul-tiple kegs and 28 for various other charges, such as disorderly conduct and public urination. Police also is-sued 10 citations for Illinois Vehicle Code violations, six of which were for intoxicated pedestrians. Urbana police also reported a DUI-related hit-and-run.

Unknown facts about the day: "With declining state support and increasing numbers of graduate programs, administrators are looking at ways to fund graduate education and to manage enrollment in graduate programs. In the spring semester 2000, there were 7,433 graduate students on campus; this semester, there are 9,050, an increase of 1,617 students, according to the Division of Management Information."

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“OFFICIAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

While administrators are looking at ways to control growth in graduate programs, any changes that are implemented will not affect students who already have assistantships, said Richard Wheeler, vice provost.

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Unofficial St. Patrick’s Day

University police will focus on protecting students, fac- ulty and staff members, and university property.

In case of emergency

Call METCAD at 911 (from campus phones, call 9-911). For non-emergencies, call 333-1216.

Instructors should not refer to other instructional plans

The Student Code (www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/) addresses student responsibilities on campus. Sections 1-102(d) and 1-302(d) concern classroom conduct expectations, and section 1-307 focuses on alcohol consumption. The code empowers instructors to ask disruptive students to leave class; after class, names of disruptive students should be reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution at 333-3680 or online at www.conflictresolution.uiuc.edu/forms/ instructorreport/form.aspx.

If asking a disruptive student to leave class could esca- late into a confrontation, seek assistance

From 30 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 6, teams of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs professionals will walk through and around buildings with classrooms and lecture halls where disruptions have occurred before.

Team members, wearing university IDs, may be sum- moned to help. Teams will be prepared to document apparent code violations and to call university police, if necessary.

Ad removed for online version
Currently, ads for oral contraceptives that appeal to women’s sense of empowerment.

The Sloan Research Fellowships support the work of exceptional young researchers early in their academic careers, and often at pivotal stages in their work,” said Paul L. Joskow, the president of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Burke’s research focuses on the synthesis and study of small molecules with the capacity to perform protein-like functions.

Society still sees something wrong with the process of menstruation, which none of us have experienced.

Menstruation is sometimes perceived as less capable than their male counterparts. Menstruation still is stigmatized, viewed as a pattern. Thus, female pilots became adept at concealing menstruation or “passing” as non-menstruants to keep their jobs.

The study, which appears in the journal Obesity, builds on previous research by Albarracín that suggests that general messages to be active can prompt people to be active in a variety of ways, some of which may have negative consequences.

Those designing public health campaigns are in the habit of trying to change one behavior at a time, Albarracín said.

They should be aware that “whatever they communicate is likely to influence not only the behavior they had in mind but other behaviors that might be somewhat remotely linked,” she said.

“They are one-third more when exposed to the exercise ads.” Those exposed to subliminal words about activity during a computer task ate about 20 percent more than those exposed to neutral words, she said.

The study concludes that weight-loss campaigns that promote exercise may actually cause people to eat more.
New silver-based ink has applications in printed electronics

By James E. Kloeppel
Physical Sciences Editor

A new ink developed by researchers at the UI allows them to write their own silver linings.

The ink, composed of silver nanoparticles, can be used in electronic and optoelectronic applications to create flexible, stretchable and spanning microelectrodes that carry signals from one circuit element to another. The printed microelectrodes can withstand repeated bending and stretching with minimal change in their electrical properties.

In a paper published Feb. 12, by Science Express, the online version of the journal Science, Jennifer Lewis, the Thurnauer Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and director of the university’s Frederick Seitz Materials Research Laboratory, and her collaborators demonstrate patterned silver microelectrodes by omnidirectional printing of concentrated nanoparticle inks with minimum widths of about 2 microns on semiconductor, plastic and glass substrates.

“Unlike inkjet or screen printing, our approach enables the microelectrodes to be printed out-of-plane, allowing them to directly cross pre-existing patterned features through the formation of spanning arches,” Lewis said.

“Typically, insulating layers or bypass electrode arrays are required in conventional layouts,”

To produce printed features, the researchers first prepare a highly concentrated silver nanoparticle ink. The ink is then extruded through a tapered cylindrical nozzle attached to a three-axis micropositioning stage, which is controlled by computer-aided design software.

When printed, the silver nanoparticles are not yet bonded together. The bonding process occurs when the printed structure is heated to 150 degrees Celsius or higher. During thermal annealing, the nanoparticles fuse into an interconnected structure. Because of the modest processing temperatures required, the printed features are compatible with flexible, organic substrates.

To demonstrate the versatility of the printing process, the researchers patterned both planar and out-of-plane silver microelectrodes; produced spanning interconnects for solar microcell arrays; and bonded silver wires to fragile, three-dimensional devices.

“Unlike conventional techniques, our approach allows fine silver wires to be bonded to delicate devices using minimal contact pressure,” said postdoctoral researcher Bok Yeop Ahn, the lead author of the paper.

“Our approach is capable of creating highly integrated systems from diverse classes of electronic materials on a broad range of substrates,” said graduate student Eric Duoss, a co-author of the paper.

“Omnidirectional printing overcomes some of the design constraints that have limited the potential of printed electronics.”

In addition to Lewis, Ahn and Duoss, the paper’s co-authors include chemistry professor Ralph Nuzzo and materials science and engineering professor John Rogers, as well as members of their research groups.

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

ACCREDITATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

said Stig Lanneskog, associate provost for strategic planning. “We think that doing this around the strategic plan is a great way to capitalize on the momentum from our having a strategic plan and has allowed us, in a very structured way, to assess the strengths and ongoing challenges of our institution.”

The self-study report provides an overview of major administrative, personnel, facilities, infrastructure and business system implementation changes that occurred since the last report in 1999. And there have been many. The past decade has brought the campus all new leadership – two new chancellors, a new provost, and all new senior administrative officers – as well as a new president for the university.

Between 1999 and 2009, the campus adopted new budgeting practices, new business- and information-management systems, a strategic planning process, inaugural labor contracts with graduate employees and with visiting academic professionals, and retired Chief Illiniwek. The landscape on the south campus was transformed from barns and pastures to a hotel/conference complex and a thriving Research Park that employs more than 1,000 people in high-tech industries.

In the 1999 review, the NCA team had concerns in four categories – resources, management, diversity and governance – and the draft self-study indicates how the campus is addressing them, such as implementing the student-paid Academic Facilities Maintenance Fund Assessment fee to fund building repairs and renovations in the wake of declining state appropriations for capital projects, and strengthening programs for recruiting and retaining faculty members from underrepresented groups.

The report also recaps policies, processes, values and goals that support the university’s missions.
Another reason could be private schools’ anachronistic approach to math.

“Private schools, if increasingly ignoring curricular trends in education, and it shows,” Lubinski said. “They’re not using up-to-date methods, and they’re not hiring teachers who are preparing lesson plans in the classroom. When you do that, you aren’t really taking advantage of the experts in math education that’s out there.”

Lubienski thinks one of the reasons that private schools don’t adopt a more reform-minded math curriculum is because some teachers are more wedded to an old-fashioned “basics” approach to math instruction. The end result, however, is students who are “prepared for 40 years ago, and not the tests of today,” she said.

Tests like NAEP, Lubinski said, have revealed that students with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards for math instruction, which have moved away from the brute-force memorization of number of teacher credentials and academic degrees, and that private school teachers reported they spent less time teaching,” Lubinski said.

“The results do seem to suggest that private schools are doing their own thing, and that they’re less likely to have paid attention to curricular trends and the fact that math instruction and math tests have changed,” she said.

Lubienski cautioned that the relationships found between the two factors and public-school performance might not be directly causal.

“The correlations might be a result, for example, of having the type of administrator who makes teacher credentials and academic degrees the priority over other things, such as religious education,” she said. “That’s often not the case for private religious schools, where parents are clearly committed to things beside academic achievement.”

The schools with the smallest percentage of certified teachers are conservative Christian schools, where less than half of teachers were certified – were, not coincidentally, the schools with the lowest aggregate math test scores.

“Those schools certainly have the prerogative to set different priorities when hiring, but it just doesn’t help them on NAEP,” Lubinski said.

Lubienski also noted that public schools tend to set aside money for teacher development as the school year progresses and periodic curriculum improvements.

“Private schools don’t invest as much in teacher development as public schools do, and they don’t have money designated for that kind of thing in the way public schools do,” Lubinski said.

Lubinski hopes that politicians who favor more privatization would realize that the invisible hand of the market doesn’t necessarily apply to education.

“You can give schools greater autonomy, but that doesn’t mean they’re going to use that autonomy to implement an innovative curriculum or improve the academics of the schools,” she said.

Instead, some private schools try to attract parents by offering a basic skills curriculum, or non-academic requirements, such as students wearing uniforms.

Privatization also assumes that parents can make judgments about what schools are best for their children.

“With schools, it’s tough to see how much kids are actually learning,” Lubinski said. “Market theory in education rests on the assumption that parents can see what they’re buying, and that they’re able to make an informed decision about their child’s education. Although parents might be able to compare schools’ SAT scores, they aren’t able to determine whether those gains are actually larger in higher scoring schools unless they know where students start when they enter school. People don’t always pick the most effective schools.”

The results were published in a paper titled “Achievement Differences and School Type: The Role of School Climate, Teacher Certification, and Instruction” in the November 2008 issue of the American Journal of Education. The published findings were based on fourths- and eighth-grade test results from the 2003 NAEP test, including data from both student achievement and comprehensive background information drawn from a nationally representative sample of more than 270,000 students from more than 10,000 schools.

**Number of reported campus crimes dropped in fall semester**

By Phil Ciciora
News Editor

The incidence of robberies and aggravated assaults and batteries declined from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, 2008, in the UI district, according to the latest crime statistics released by the Division of Public Safety.

Robberies were down 52.6 percent during the fall semester compared with 19 during the same period the previous year. Seventeen robberies were reported for the same period in 2008. The number of aggravated assaults and batteries remained unchanged for the second year in a row, with nine reported during the September through December period in 2007 and in 2008. Fourteen aggravated assaults and batteries were reported in the same period in 2006.

Criminal sexual assaults during the period decreased 15.4 percent from 13 to 11 incidents. The number of public indecency and lewdness cases decreased from three to two in 2008.

As with the previous two years, no homicides were reported during the reporting period.

“The reduction in crime can be attributed in part to the diligent work and cooperation between agencies,” said Barbara R. O’Connor, the executive director of public safety and UI police chief.

“The UI police, along with our colleagues at Champaign and Urbana police departments, have developed a cooperative approach in addressing crime, and we thank those police agencies for their efforts. Over the next year we will continue to enhance our partnership.”

The majority of the criminal sexual assaults as well as the majority of the aggravated assaults and batteries occurred in the district’s northwest quadrant, which includes the University Avenue on the north, Chalmers Street and Gregory Drive on the south, Wright Street on the east and the railroad tracks east of Neil Street on the west.

Consistent with data from the previous two years’ September to December reporting periods, the majority of the aggravated assaults and batteries occurred on Saturday nights and early Sunday mornings between midnight and 3 a.m. However, slightly fewer victims had been consuming alcohol than during the prior two years. Most of the crimes perpetrated on UI students were by strangers.

As always, police urge people to use good safety practices.

Pedestrians are encouraged to walk with other people, to be alert to their surroundings, and, if they have cell phones, to keep them out and call 911 if they notice a suspicious person or suspicious activity.

“Awareness is essential,” O’Connor said. “Please don’t hesitate to contact the police if something seems unusual.”

Students also are encouraged to take buses or call SafeRides (265-7433) between 5 p.m. and 6:15 a.m.

The UI crime report includes incidents that occurred in an area extending from University Avenue on the north to Mary’s Road on the south, Race Street on the east and the railroad tracks just east of Neil Street on the west.

The crime statistics for the UI district are reported three times annually and in new-student orientations and campus crime-prevention programs.
New technique reveals the atomic structure of nanocrystals

By James E. Kloeppel
Physical Sciences Editor

A new technique developed by researchers at the UI overcomes the limit of diffraction and can reveal the atomic structure of a single nanocrystal with a resolution of less than 1 angstrom (less than one billionth of a centimeter).

Optical and electronic properties of small assemblages of atoms called quantum dots depend upon their electronic structure – not just what’s on the surface, but also what’s below it. But with current imaging processes, scientists can only calculate the electronic structure, they need to know where the atoms are positioned in order to do so accurately.

Getting this information, however, has proved to be a challenge for nanocrystals like quantum dots. Mapping out the positions of atoms requires clues provided by the diffraction pattern. But the patterns provide clues, but not enough. By combining two sources of information – images and diffraction patterns taken with the same electron microscope – researchers at the UI can achieve a new understanding the atomic structure of single nanocrystals with a resolution of less than 1 angstrom (less than one billionth of a centimeter).

"We chose cadmium-sulfide quantum dots because they have a very well-defined optical and electronic properties, and the importance of atomic structure is critical for aligning quantum dots for energy conversion and in medical imaging." – Jian-Min (Jim) Zuo, professor of materials science and lead author Weijie Huang, a graduate student and the corresponding author of a paper that is being published in the National Academy of Sciences journal Science.

With Zuo, co-authors of the paper are former doctoral student and lead author Weijie Huang (now at Dow Chemical Co.), UI postdoctoral professor of materials science and engineering Moonsuk Shim, former postdoctoral researcher Asa Bin Jiang (now at FEI Co.), and former doctoral student and lead author Weijie Huang (now at Dow Chemical Co.).

Revealing atomic structure...
Food-safety expert Robin Orr

In a study of London taxi drivers found that new experiences in memory is destroyed.

"This magnificent gift from the Lemanns has enabled us to make this investment in attracting leading Brazilian intellectuals to pursue significant research and writing projects, and to contribute to the institute’s academic program through teaching, collaborative research, conference participation and other means. Collaborative research awards will support joint research with faculty members and graduate students at Urbana and their counterparts in Brazilian institutions. The program also offers funds to support research by faculty members and graduate students at Urbana on any aspect of Brazil's culture, society, economics, history, political science, language and literature, and other fields. The award will provide endowed graduate fellowships for two Brazilian students per year to travel and study fellowships (to enable a Brazilian graduate student to spend a year in the United States) or to undergraduate students to study in Brazil for a semester, and undergraduate UI scholarships for research on Brazil."

The Lemann Brazil Leadership Fund will provide short-term leadership fellowships to Brazilian professionals and government officials who wish to participate in one of the UI's short-term executive-training programs, and long-term fellowships to highly qualified young professionals from Brazil to earn a master's degree in policy economics or other appropriate graduate programs. The gift also will provide for conferences, publications, seminars and workshops on Brazilian topics that will involve university and public and private-sector representatives from Brazil, a lecture series, and support for enhancing the campus's Portuguese language program.

Planning for the institute is under way, and some programs are expected to begin this year. The institute will hire its own director. The Lemanns' gift to the UI also has been significant: $1 million for the Lemann Chair in Economics, $500,000 for the Jorge Lemann Scholars Fund, and $350,000 for the Lemann-Illinois Brazil Collaborative research program. The Jorge Lemann Chair in Economics is held by professor Werner Baer, a Werner Baer has a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Chicago and has taught at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has an expertise in international trade and development economics.

The Lemanns' latest gift is a significant addition to the university’s Brilliant Futures Campaign, which was publicly launched June 1, 2007. The campaign officially began on July 1, 2003, and will continue through 2011. Of the $2.25 billion campaign objective, $1.5 billion is the goal for the Urbana-Champaign campus; $650 million for the Chicago campus and $28 million for the Springfield campus.

Jorge Paulo Lemann, of Jona, Switzerland, and his family have pledged to give $14 million to establish a Brazilian studies and research institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The Lemann Institute, which will create one of the leading Brazilian studies programs in the nation, will be based in the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, with participation by units in International Programs and Studies. The Lemanns' latest gift is a significant addition to the university’s Brilliant Futures Campaign, which was publicly launched June 1, 2007. The campaign officially began on July 1, 2003, and will continue through 2011. Of the $2.25 billion campaign objective, $1.5 billion is the goal for the Urbana-Champaign campus; $650 million for the Chicago campus and $28 million for the Springfield campus.

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Editor's note: Peanuts have been much in the news lately because of illnesses and even deaths traced to contaminated products, such as a product from a plant in Georgia. Robin Orr, the director of programming for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program as well as a professor in the UI's Nutrition department, has discussed food safety in general, and peanuts in particular, in a recent interview.

Sales of peanut products have dropped since the news of contamination at a U.S. peanut processing facility first came to public attention. Why does the public's apparent concern about peanut products justified?

People should be concerned and it is their responsibility to be informed. The problem began with peanut-processing plants in Georgia that was not safely processing peanuts. Salmonella in tainted products can cause gastrointestinal problems, and even death. The FDA has done a great job keeping the public informed. As we recommend in all food-facility leaders, “when in doubt, throw it out.” If you are eating a major brand of peanut butter from a jar purchased from a retailer, you are safe. If you’re going to eat peanuts in a bar, ask the manager where the peanuts were grown and processed. They should know if they say Piano. The FDA, if you have any questions about the origin of the nuts, don’t eat them. If you want Peanut butter in a peanut processing plant from Georgia, you can get first-line of recalled foods.

What can and should be done to prevent future outbreaks?

At the public’s request, the FDA has taken steps to prevent future outbreaks.

Are there guidelines in place that should be followed to prevent a problem or are stricter policies needed?

Following our current guidelines should be enough. It is expensive and time-consuming to find out the origin and cause of salmonella in the food supply. Strict policies are expensive and cost lots of money, and the process is quite time-consuming. We need to find out the source.

A Minute With…

Food-safety expert Robin Orr

By Diane Yates

When it comes to the hippocampus, a brain structure vital to memory formation, size matters. Numerous studies have shown that bigger is usually better. Now researchers have found that elderly adults who are physically fit have bigger hippocampus and better spatial memory than those who are less fit. In a study in the journal Hippocampus, shows that hippocampus size in physically fit adults accounts for about 40 percent of their advantage in spatial memory. The hippocampus is a key player in spatial navigation and other types of relational memory. New experiences are believed to modify hippocampus size in humans. For example, a study of London taxi drivers found that the posterior portion of the hippocampus was larger in experienced taxi drivers than in students. In a study of German medical students found that the same region of the hippocampus increased in size as they studied for their final exams. Studies also have found that the hippocampus shrinks with age, a process that coincides with small but significant cognitive impairments. However, differences among individuals.

Earlier studies found that exercise increased hippocampus size and spatial memory in rodents, but the new study is the first to demonstrate that exercise can affect hippocampus size and memory in humans. The researchers conducted a volumetric study of the hippocampus and the direspiratory fitness of 165 adults (109 of whom were physically fit). Using magnetic resonance imaging, they studied the participants’ spatial reasoning. They found a significant association between hippocampus size and fitness or her performance on certain spatial memory tests. There was also a strong correlation between fitness and hippocampus size.

“The higher fit people have a bigger hippocampus,” said Art Kramer, who led the study with Pittsburgh psychologist Kirk Erickson. “We see there is this significant and substantial relationship between what you fit are and how good your memory is, or at least a certain kind of memory, a certain kind of memory that we need all the time.” Kramer said.

“This is really a clinically significant finding because it supports the notion that you if you’re not a competitive runner, you may influence brain shrinkage in old age,” Erickson said. “Basically, if you stay fit, you are going to have better regions of your brain involved in learning and memory.”

An impairment of spatial memory “is one of a number of reasons why people end up losing their independence,” Kramer said. “Here is yet more evidence that becoming fit has implications for how well you’re going to do in the rest of your life.” Kramer is a full-time faculty member of the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology at Illinois.

Food-safety expert Robin Orr

The hippocampus is a key part of the brain, is essential to memory formation. Re-""
Viruses is that the organism into which DNA viruses are com- bedded in is not the same one that their genes are actually targeted to operate on,” Whitfield said. “So it’s sort of like having two hosts, except that there's not a complete life cycle in either host.”

Whitfield and Stoltz have each spent decades studying the inter- actions of caterpillars and parasitoids with wasps. “The virus is beneficial to the parasitoid wasps that inject these viruses, known as polydnavouruses,” Whitfield said. “These viruses are injected into caterpillars at the same time that they lay their eggs in the caterpillars. Because these ‘virus-like particles’ have become an integral part of the wasp genome, some researchers have suggested they should no longer be considered viruses. ‘It’s true that the wasp DNA and the viral DNA are now com- bined into the same genome, so maybe it’s not productive to think of them as separate entities.”

Many virology texts won’t even mention polydnavouruses,” Whitfield said. “The issue we bring up is: Do we want to call these viruses? And if not, why not? Because they certainly start- ed out as viruses. And if so, then we have to change the definition of viruses to somehow specify what it is that a virus has to con- tain, and what it has to do, to be considered a virus.”

Concussions linked to delayed suppressed brain functioning

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

The strange interaction of a parasitic wasp, the caterpillar in which it lays its eggs, and a virus that helps it overcome the caterpillar’s immune defenses has some scientists re- thinking the definition of a virus.

In an essay in the journal Sci- ence, Donald Stoltz, a professor of microbiology and depression at Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and James Whitfield, a professor of entomology at the University of Roanoke College, in Roanoke, Virginia, argued that some viruses are not normally seen in viruses, but they actually target – and act upon – the immune system of the caterpillar (a more transient host). The “virus-like particles” in the caterpillars are actually targeted to the wasps’ own chro- mosomes, the researchers said.

“Unique thing about these viruses is that the organism into which DNA viruses are com- bedded in is not the same one that their genes are actually targeted to operate on,” Whitfield said. “So it’s sort of like having two hosts, except that there’s not a complete life cycle in either host.”

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By Melissa Mitchell
News Editor

Word is spreading, on the sidelines, in the locker rooms, and in the media, that an athlete whose bell has been rung — that is, suffered a concussion — may have experienced an injury that could take a more seri- ous toll later in life.

This is no link between young adults with sports-related brain injuries and in the media, Hillman said the researchers had considered performance results of 90 male and female college-aged student athletes who participate in sports, including soccer, ice hockey and rugby. Roughly half of the sample had sustained concussions within the past 3.4 years. As part of the investigation, participants’ functional cognitive performance was measured using a battery of tests called the ImPACT inventory. “No significant differences were found between one generation on the ImPACT,” the researchers indicated in their report. Subjects also were fitted with a 64-channel “Quik-cap”; electrodes in the cap measured event-related brain potentials (ERPs), or electrical responses to a stimulus in the environment — the oddball task. “They were told they would see two types of triangles — regular and upside down — and told. ‘Whenever you see an upside down triangle, press a button.’” Hillman said. “They saw a regular triangle the majority of time. The upside down one was the ‘oddball.’ But what we don’t instruct them on is that they saw a number of images they had no idea were coming. Examples of novel stum- plus a cat, a bird, an air- plane, a coffee cup. So you don’t know what to do ... you have to orient your environment and fig- ure it out.”

Hillman said the researchers saw no long-term effects of concus- sion among participants when presented with the novel stimuli. “In retrospect, I’m not sure I would’ve expected so. Orienting to one’s environment has evolu- tionary implications: The bunny’s in the woods eating grass, bears coming, or a bear and it’s going to eat you. So we wanted to get a better idea of what was happening at the brain level to try to figure out why these athletes were reporting.”

To move beyond storytelling to seek possible corroborating scien- tific evidence, Broglio enlisted the assistance of UI kinesiology pro- fessor Charles Hillman and graduate students Mathew Ponnifex and Philip O’Connor. Hillman’s expet- tise is in electrophysiology — the study of electrical activity that occurs in the body and brain. The concussion study consid- ered performance results of 90 male and female college-aged student athletes who participate in sports, including soccer, ice hockey and rugby. Roughly half of the sample had sustained concussions within the past 3.4 years. As part of the investigation, participants’ functional cognitive performance was measured using a battery of tests called the ImPACT inventory. “No significant differences were found between one generation on the ImPACT,” the researchers indicated in their report. Subjects also were fitted with a 64-channel “Quik-cap”; electrodes in the cap measured event-related brain potentials (ERPs), or electrical responses to a stimulus in the environment — the oddball task. “They were told they would see two types of triangles — regular and upside down — and told. ‘Whenever you see an upside down triangle, press a button.’” Hillman said. “They saw a regular triangle the majority of time. The upside down one was the ‘oddball.’ But what we don’t instruct them on is that they saw a number of images they had no idea were coming. Examples of novel stum- plus a cat, a bird, an air- plane, a coffee cup. So you don’t know what to do ... you have to orient your environment and fig-ure it out.”

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Back of the lab, the oddball task yielded noticeably different results. A kind subjects’ P3b ampli- tude — which Hillman described as “a measure of the amount of atten- tional resources allocated toward a stimulus” — that the researchers detected a significant decrement among previously con- cussed participants. “With concussions, individuals showed a decrease in their ability to allocate attentional resources to- ward that oddball stimulus,” Hillman said. “So that would suggest they had deficits in their ability to update their working memory of the stimulus environment.”

And this is a long-term defi- cit.”

That finding is what leads the researchers to conclude that peo- ple who’ve incurred concussions may be at greater risk of cognitive impairment.

Still, Broglio cautions that further, cross-sectional study is required before reaching conclu- sions regarding long-term effects of mild traumatic brain injuries. “It’s really unknown at this point,” he said. “All these kids are here (at the UI), so obviously they are very high-functioning. They do very well in school. All of our behavioral data from the ImPACT tests shows they’re normal.”

The issue becomes as they age, as natural aging takes over and cognitive processes slow down and decline, whether this has an exacerbating effect. With age, you are less likely to pay at- tention to things going on around you that make you more suscept- ible to injury.”

Hillman also stressed addi- tional research is needed not only to better understand how concus- sions affect cognitive performance as a person ages, but in order to determine whether other influen- tial factors — such as early onset of certain neurodegenerative dis- eases — play a role in decreased P3b amplitudes.

“So, we’re looking into con- ducting (more) investigations, and will look at those with and without a history of concussion through the entire lifespan — up to 70 or 80 years old,” Broglio said.

Delayed effect
Charles Hillman, left, and Steven Broglio, both professors of kinesiology and community health, have found that concussions are linked to suppressed brain functioning years later.

In an essay in the journal Sci- ence, Donald Stoltz, a professor of microbiology and depression at Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and James Whitfield, a professor of entomology at the University of Roanoke College, in Roanoke, Virginia, argued that some viruses are not normally seen in viruses, but they actually target – and act upon – the immune system of the caterpillar (a more transient host). The “virus-like particles” in the caterpillars are actually targeted to the wasps’ own chro- mosomes, the researchers said.

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New plasma transistor could create sharper displays

By James E. Kloeppe
Phyiscal Sciences Editor

By integrating a solid-state electron emitter and a microcavity plasma device, researchers at the UI have created a plasma transistor that could be used to make lighter, less expensive and higher resolution flat-panel displays.

“The new device is capable of controlling both the plasma conduction current and the light emission with an emitter voltage of 5 volts or less,” said Gary Eden, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, and director of the Laboratory for Optical Physics and Engineering at the UI.

At the heart of the plasma transistor is a microcavity plasma, an electronic-photicon device in which an electrically charged gas (a plasma) is contained within a microscopic cavity. Power is supplied by two electrodes at voltages of up to 200 volts.

Graduate student Kuo-Feng (Kevin) Chen fabricated the plasma transistor from copper-clad laminate into which a microcavity 500 microns in diameter was produced by standard photolithographic techniques. The solid-state electron emitter was made from a silicon wafer, topped with a thin layer of silicon dioxide.

The microcavity is approximately the diameter of a human hair, and is filled with a small amount of gas. When excited by electrons, atoms in the plasma radiate light. The color of light depends on what gas is placed in the microcavity. Neon emits red, for example, and argon emits blue light.

Around the plasma is a thin boundary layer called the sheath. Within the sheath, electrical current is carried by negatively charged electrons, but instead by positively charged ions. Much heavier than electrons and therefore harder to accelerate, the ions require a large electric field generated by a large voltage drop across the sheath.

The intense electric field within the plasma sheath also promotes light emission, said Eden, who is also a researcher at the university’s Coordinated Science Laboratory and at the Micro and Nanotechnology Laboratory. “By injecting electrons from the emitter into the sheath, we can significantly increase the flow of current through the plasma, which increases the plasma’s conductivity and light emission.”

While the microcavity plasma still requires up to 200 volts to emit light and control current, the current that is sent through the sheath to the bulk plasma determines how much current is carried by the two electrodes driving the microplasma.

In previous work, Eden’s team created flat-panel plasma lamps in two sheets of a meniscus-filled microplasma. The researchers have applied for a patent.

Patent pending Gary Eden, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Illinois, and colleagues have created a plasma transistor that could be used to make lighter, less expensive and higher resolution flat panel displays. The researchers have applied for a patent.

In-store video ads help retailers, hurt traditional media

By Jan Dennis
Business & Law Editor

Video advertising in stores is a moneymaker for retailers, but a growing threat to already cash-strapped print and broadcast media, according to a new study co-written by a UI business professor.

Yunchuan “Frank” Liu says in-store marketing has surged in the last decade, fueled by on-the-spot commercials that have proven persuasive with shoppers and lower advertising rates that are popular with manufacturers.

Retailers have a pricing edge over traditional media outlets because they can sell both advertising revenue and sales increases sparked by the ads, according to the study, which will appear in Marketing Science, a peer-reviewed journal.

“Commercial media only gains from advertising with no direct stake in how much product is sold,” Liu said. “Retailers have incentive to subsidize rates because the more manufacturers advertise, the more sales could increase.”

The study, based on economic models, is the first to examine the impact of in-store advertising on the product-distribution chain, said Liu, who co-wrote the study with University of Southern California economist Anthony J. Dukes.

Liu says the findings are among the darker sides for newspapers, magazines and broadcasters already wrestling with audience and revenue declines in a market spread thin by the growth of online, cable and other options.

“In the future, we see more advertising available in stores, and more advertising shifting from commercial media to in-store media,” said Liu, a professor of business administration.

He says print and broadcast media may have to adjust their sights on foraging ads for food, cleaning supplies and other staple products and focusing instead on brand awareness campaigns, services such as movies or health care and big-ticket items that consumers ponder before buying.

“Commercial media could become a high-quality platform for branding long-range business services not available in stores,” Liu said. “But for impulse purchases – cereal, razor blades – and those kinds of retail products – in-store advertising will be really important.”

The study says in-store advertising also provides social benefits, giving consumers product information they shop when they need it most.

“Retailers benefit, manufacturer benefits, and consumers benefit,” Liu said. “With lower advertising rates, manufacturers advertise more, giving consumers more information about products that satisfy their wants and needs.”

Up to 70 percent of consumers make buying decisions while they shop, and research shows that brand recall is 65 percent among Wal-Mart TV viewers compared with just 23 percent among in-home viewers, the study says.

Liu says Wal-Mart pioneered in-store advertising in 1999, launching 100,000 screens in more than 2,650 stores that reach 336 million shoppers every month. It has the fifth-largest reach of any network, trailing only ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox.

Other large retailers have since followed, including Best Buy, Costco, Macy’s and Borders. With the surge, Liu said, about a quarter of Americans now go to at least one retailer every week that uses in-store advertising.

“In-store media is more likely to be profitable for retailers who are large and powerful enough to share a significant portion of the revenue with manufacturers through lower rates,” he said. “It’s not as effective for smaller retailers because start-up costs are high.

The study also found that retailers should discount advertising rates for manufacturers with large, well-known brands, while charging more for lesser-known brands that are still trying to carve a market niche.

Well-known manufacturers know that customers will buy their product anyway, so they want a discount to advertise in stores,” Liu said. “Lesser-known brands have more to gain, so retailers should charge them more.”

He says in-store advertising will ultimately impact marketing strategy, providing another option that manufacturers can use to lure buyers.

“In-store media will likely focus on lower-cost brands that people buy frequently,” he said. “Commercial media could be a good platform for branding and bigger-ticket items. Some manufacturers might want to do both, branding their product through conventional media, then using in-store media to lure customers as they shop.”

In-store advertising Yunchuan “Frank” Liu, professor of business administration, says in-store marketing has surged in the last decade, fueled by on-the-spot commercials that have proven persuasive with shoppers and popular with manufacturers drawn by lower advertising rates.
Geeks may be chic, but negative nerd stereotype still exists

By Phil Clicora
News Editor

Despite the increased popularity of geek culture—movies based on comic books, video games, virtual worlds—and the ubiquitous presence of computer geeks, the nerd, still suffers from a negative stereotype in popular culture. This may help explain why women and minorities are increasingly shying away from careers in information technology, says Lori Kendall, a UI professor and director of the UI Graduate School of Library and Information Science.

“Ten years ago, I thought the nerd stereotype would fade as more women started to use computers in their everyday lives,” Kendall said. “I thought, ‘Sure, we’re all using computers, we’re all nerds.’ Well, that hasn’t been true.”

Kendall thinks the durability of the nerd stereotype and the increasing ubiquity of computers affect how people view computer users. “It becomes a big unconsciousness, and the influence it exerts over our increasingly hyper-connected digital lives,” she said.

“I think it’s part of the bigger picture of how we view computer users and technology, and has an effect on how women and minorities are viewed when they go into a computer-related profession,” Kendall said. “That’s the implication of that stereotype—is there an expectation we have that people who understand computers are more likely to be white male gangsters, rather than white male computer scientists?”

The new generation has been more open to understanding the differences. Kendall discovered that nerds are often represented in a way that is specifically contrasted with black males. “In the ‘White & Nerdy’ video, it shows ‘White & Nerdy’ as this white nerd, and then it contrasts him with stereotypical images of black gangsters,” she said.

Kendall said that though the number of minorities earning degrees in computer science, and that remained steady, the number of women has declined in recent years. But, she noted, those women and minorities who eventually earn computer science degrees don’t always get jobs in the field.

“When you look at who’s being employed, a far lower percentage of women and minorities are being employed in computer science than are getting degrees in computer science,” she said. “There’s been plenty of research into why women don’t go into computer science, and it’s at least in part because they associate it with this kind of negative stuff, and they think that if they go into computer science they’re going to have to be anti-social. That turns people off who don’t see themselves as fitting that stereotype.”

If the nerd stereotype is so toxic, then why is being a geek so chic? Why, for example, are PC’s personified as nerdy and Macs as the apotheosis of geeky cool in the “PC vs. Mac” ad campaign?

Kendall said there’s a distinct difference between “nerds” and “geeks,” despite their apparent similarities.

“The value of the word ‘geek’ has really changed over the years,” she said. “People talk about ‘geek explosion’, which indicates a very intense focus on an interest, and sometimes it’s an interest that not a lot of people share. It tends to indicate expertise and passion about something.”

‘Nerd’ is a sticker term that is applied to people in a more negative way,” Kendall said. “‘Geek’ is something you can do and then leave behind, but ‘nerd’ is what you are.”

A Minute With…
Sports economist Scott Tainsky on Chicago’s Olympic bid

Editor’s note: Chicago 2016, the organization seeking to bring the 2016 Summer Olympic and Paralympic games to Chicago, recently went public with details of its official bid to the International Olympic Committee. Scott Tainsky, a sports economist and professor of recreation, sport and tourism at Illinois, discussed cost-benefit factors associated with Chicago’s proposal in an interview with News Bureau editor Melissa Mitchell.

Chicago 2016’s bid projects a total cost of $1.8 billion. It picks up that tab, how is the expenditure expected to translate in terms of an economic return to the city?

The city bears the brunt of the upfront costs, although it has secured hundreds of significant pledges from prominent members of the private sector. So far, there seems to be overwhelming support from Chicago’s economic community, but caution is in order. The Beijing games cost China more than $40 billion, and the final tally in Athens was reported to four times the original $2.4 billion estimate. We always tell our students to consider the source; here, the source is politicians and big business—mostly owned and controlled politically and financially from the prestige of winning an Olympic bid. As far as returns, there’s a belief that the games can generate $3.8 billion in revenues, but most have scoffed at that number.

What about the state of Illinois? Does it stand to gain as well?

“Not just Illinois, but Indiana and Wisconsin, too. It’s already been decided that Madison, Wis., will serve as the hub for cycling, and it’s not out of the question that facilities on the University of Notre Dame campus make sense. There is potential for another gigantic outdoor stadium, so that means Chicago has a reasonable shot at hosting the Olympic mountain that may be won by the city that can safeguard the living things that are key to the event, such as the unicorn,” Kendall said.

A Minute With… is provided by the UI News Bureau as a venue for Illinois faculty experts to comment on current topics in the news. To view archived interviews, go to http://illinois.edu/go/amw.
Madhu Khanna, a professor of agricultural and consumer economics, was one of 19 environmental researchers from across North America awarded a Leopold Leadership Fellowship for 2009. Based at Stanford University’s Institute for the Environment, the Leopold Leadership Program was founded in 1998 to help academic scientists make their scientific knowledge accessible to decision makers. Each year the program selects up to 20 mid-career academic environmental scientists as fellows. They receive intensive communication and leadership training to help them deliver scientific information more effectively to policymakers, business leaders and the public.

Khanna will join a network of 134 past fellows active in science outreach and working to infuse scientific understanding into public- and private-sector discussions about the environment.

The Leopold Leadership Program is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

campus recreation

Campus Recreation marketing staff members were recently recognized for their work by the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association. The Creative Excellence Awards are designed to recognize the innovation and creativity of association members and acknowledge their outstanding accomplishments in marketing recreational sports, fitness, facilities and programs.

The Fall 2008 Campus Recreation Guide captured first place in the category of Comprehensive Guide. It was designed by Erik Riha, lead assistant director of marketing.

Leadership Program was founded in 1998 to help academic scientists make their science accessible to decision makers. Each year the program selects up to 20 mid-career academic environmental scientists as fellows. They receive intensive communication and leadership training to help them deliver scientific information more effectively to policymakers, business leaders and the public.

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Elder Law Lecture

Retirement risk management discussed

Olivia S. Mitchell will present the 2009 Ann F. Baum Memorial Lecture at 3 p.m. March 9 in the Max Rowe Auditorium at the UI College of Law. A reception will follow.

Mitchell’s lecture, “New Challenges for Retirement Risk Management,” will review key findings from recent research on accumulation and decumulation for retirement, as well as products that will help make retirement more secure.

Mitchell is a professor of financial economics at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. She is the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans Professor, chair of the insurance and risk management department, and director of the Pension Research Council. She also is director of the Boettner and risk management department, and director of the Pen- employee Benefit Plans Professor, chair of the insurance and risk management department, and director of the Pension Research Council. She also is director of the Boettner and risk management department, and director of the Pen- employee Benefit Plans Professor, chair of the insurance and risk management department, and director of the Pension Research Council. She also is director of the Boettner and risk management department, and director of the Pen-

‘How Do Fat Cells Communicate?’

Guest talks about obesity and diabetes

Obesity and diabetes have reached epidemic proportions in the United States, affecting children and adults. An estimated 60 percent of adults are overweight or obese, and an estimated 34 million Americans have diabetes. An estimated 10,000 Americans die of obesity-related diseases each year. In the United States, children and adults of all age groups are at risk for becoming obese. The National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that adults maintain a healthy weight by consuming a well-balanced diet and engaging in regular physical activity.

The lecture will provide an overview of advances in understanding the pathophysiology of obesity and diabetes and highlight her research on intertissue communication in the setting of obesity, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome.

Deaconess Medical Center, a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, also is chief of the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School.

‘Intertissue Communication in Obesity, Diabetes and Metabolism’ was the title of the lecture. The lecture was held in early June. The committee tried to award about eight scholarships each year to qualified individuals pursuing degrees at an accredited college or university.

Food and entertainment

Annual International Dinner is March 15

The 26th Annual International Dinner and Performance Night will be from 6 to 8 p.m. March 15 at the University YMCA.

The dinner is held each spring in partnership with the Cosmopolitan Club, the Office of International Student and Scholar Services, and the University YMCA. Each year, international students and faculty members entertain the audience with dance, singing and other forms of performance art as diners enjoy a buffet of dishes from more than 30 countries.

Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA. Tickets are $8 and can be purchased at the University YMCA.
A chance to journey through the molecular world of photosynthesis, look on as the unrehearsed reactions of friends and family to strange objects are just some of the extraordinary experiences awaiting visitors March 13-14 at Beckman Institute Open House 2009. The event will be held at the institute from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 13, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 14. Metered parking is available in the parking deck across from the institute.

The open house will feature more than 30 exhibits highlighting the work taking place at one of the nation’s leading centers for interdisciplinary research. Interactive displays, demonstrations of scientific projects, and first looks at some of the innovative technologies being developed at the institute will bring visitors into the interesting and important world of Beckman research. Many exhibits will demonstrate computer science at Johns Hopkins, a research fellow at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the UI and a senior presidential fellow with the Council on Library and Information Resources.

College of Engineering

How to balance work, self and relationships

David Whyte, poet, speaker and author, will give a talk about his latest book at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center at 5 p.m. March 19. His talk, titled the same as his book, “The Three Marriages: Re-imagining Work, Self and Relationship,” is free and open to the public.

His visit is sponsored by the College of Engineering. Whyte’s book suggests that people sustain three marriage relationships—self-marriage, family marriage, and work marriage—and that each is in need of a different form of balance. Whyte says in a “work/life” balance is too simplistic, and is “a concept that has us simply lashing ourselves on the back and working harder in each of the three compartments. In the ensuing exhaustion, we ultimately give up on one or more of them to gain an easier life. ... People find it hard to balance work with family, family with self, because it might not be a question of balance. Some other dynamic is in play, something to do with a very human attempt at happiness that does not quantify different parts of life and then set them against one another. We are collectively exhausted because of our inability to hold competing parts of ourselves together in a more integrated way.”

INNER VOICES Social Issues Theatre

March play addresses anxiety

“Cafe Leastress: the place where wandering strangers congregate,” put on by the INNER VOICES Social Issues Theatre, will look at issues involving anxiety.

Scheduled performances:
- March 10 at 8 p.m. (Armory Free Theatre, Room 160 the Armory)
- March 11 at 8 p.m. (Armory Free Theatre, Room 160 the Armory)
- March 12 at 8 p.m. (Armory Free Theatre, Room 160 the Armory)
- March 17 at 8 p.m. at Pennsylvania Avenue Residence
- March 18 at 8 p.m. at the Courtyard Cafe in the Union
- March 19 at 8 p.m. at the Peabody Private Dining Hall

Since 1995, the theater program has produced challenging and timely pieces that address social and health issues. All events are free and open to the public. A discussion with the audience will take place after the performance.

For more information, visit: innervoices.uiuc.edu.
0 Thursday
“Migration and its Discon-
tents; Ethnicity, Identity, and the Visual Arts in Western Eu-
rasia.” Cora L. Smith, Ohio University. Noon. The Office of
Cultural and Multicultural Affairs. The Office of
Cultural and Multicultural Affairs.

1 Friday
“History of Kids are Chang-
ing the World.” Michael F. Patrino, co-founder of TakingIT
Global. Noon. 210A Beckman Institute. The Office of
Cultural and Multicultural Affairs.

2 Saturday
“Science.” 6:30 p.m. 126 Graduate School of
Science. The University Library.

3 Monday
“How Do Our Fat Cells Com-
municate With Other Organs
and the Brain? The Adipocyte
and the Brain?” Michael A.
Furdyk, co-founder of TakingIT
Global. Noon. Latzer Hall, University
YMCA. The Office of
Cultural and Multicultural Affairs.

4 Tuesday
“Preservation Problems and
Conflicting Values in Saudi
Arabia.” Rocheba Panning, University
of Colorado. 3-5 p.m. 109A
Davenport Hall. The Office of
Cultural and Multicultural Affairs.

5 Wednesday
“Radio and Decolonization in

6 Thursday
“Radio and Decolonization in

7 Friday
“Headscarves and Hotpants:
Debating Gender/sexuality, Secularism and Religious
Freedoms in the ‘New Europe.’” Karen Power, Bowdoin College. 4 p.m. 101 International Studies Building.

8 Saturday
“How Do Our Fat Cells Com-
municate With Other Organs
and the Brain? The Adipocyte
and the Brain?” Michael A.
Furdyk, co-founder of TakingIT
Global. Noon. Latzer Hall, University
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9 Sunday
“How Do Our Fat Cells Com-
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and the Brain? The Adipocyte
and the Brain?” Michael A.
Furdyk, co-founder of TakingIT
Global. Noon. Latzer Hall, University
YMCA. The Office of
Cultural and Multicultural Affairs.

Ad removed for online version
CALENDAR. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16
With Small Molecules.” Er-" rock Carraway, assistant professor Technische Hochschule Zürich, 4 p.m. 118 Roger Adams Lab. Organic Chemistry.

“Economic Activities in Rela-" Diane Hammond, assistant professor to Economic Geography. Latinas at Work in the U.S. and Mexico — an ANNF Na-" Paul H. Bongaarts, assistant professor posal.” Betsy Sweet, UI. 9:30 p.m. p. 336 Lincoln Hall. Geography, Sociology and Urban and Regional Planning.

“A Psychoanalytic Ethics of Transla-" Richard M. Vale, University of Chicago. 9:30 p.m. Lucy Ellis Lounge, 1080 For-" and Translation in Translati-" University of Chicago. 9:30 p.m. n’s Languages and Literatures.

“Molecular Contrast Enhance-" Gregory Hall. 3:30 p.m. 321 Science of Teaching and Learn-

nation of Social Goals, Coping with Social Problems? An Exami-" William A. Buehler, assistant professor nation of Social Goals, Coping with Social Problems?”

“Paradigms, Pathways, and Perspectives.” Robert J. Jackson, assistant professor in Comparative Literature. 3 p.m. 152 Darrow Hall. Comparative Literature.

“Web Enhancement in Digital Li-" Carla L. Kirschman, assistant professor brary and Information Science. 3 p.m. 113 Alden Library. Library and Information Science.


“Disability in the Workplace.” Warren G. Skaife, assistant professor in Business Administration. 8:30 a.m. 219 McFarland Hall. Business Administration.

“Solutions to Global Poverty.”” Daniel N.8. 9:00 a.m. 1647 Delnor and Thorton Room. Economics.

“Can we Reconcile Development with Sustainability?”” David P. Cane, associate professor in Sustainable Systems Engineering. 10:30 a.m. 219 McFarland Hall. Sustainable Systems Engineering.

“The Work of University of Illi-" Michael J. Bonfanti, assistant professor nois’s English Department.” 10 a.m. 219 McFarland Hall. English.

“Strategic Planning.”” Robert G. Anderson, director. 3 p.m. 219 Huff Hall. Administrative Services.


“Multi-Core and Many Cores.”” Y. Xia, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. 3 p.m. 219 Huff Hall. Electrical and Computer Engineering.

“Mechanistic Insights From the Sing-" Andrew Lyon, Georgia Tech. 3 p.m. 219 Huff Hall. Psychology.

“Identity and Community: A Case Study of a University Student.”” T. R. Smith, assistant professor in Psychology. 3 p.m. 219 Huff Hall. Psychology.

“Crossing the (Indian) Color Line in the United States.”” Sarah Shair, assistant professor in American Studies. 3 p.m. 219 Huff Hall. American Studies.

“Molecular Contrast Enhancement in Computer Optical Im-" Fang Wang, assistant professor in Bioengineering. 3 p.m. 112 Chem Annex. Physical Sciences.


“Healthy Aging at UIUC.”” V. R. Balasubramanian, assistant professor in Medicine. 3 p.m. 112 Krannert Center. Medicine.

“Why College Matters.”” Robert G. Anderson, director. 3:30 p.m. 219 Huff Hall. Administrative Services.

“The Freshman.”” Andrew B. Berger, assistant professor. 3:30 p.m. 112 Huff Hall. Phi Alpha Theta.

“An NNSF Proposal.”” Paul H. Bongaarts, assistant professor. 3:30 p.m. 112 Huff Hall. Phi Alpha Theta.

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Inside Illinois
March 5, 2009

more calendar of events

CALENDAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

et cetera


6 Friday Reading/Book Signing. Yu Xi, author. 4:30 p.m. Author’s corner. 2nd floor. Illini Union Bookstore: English and Illini Union Bookstore.


11 Wednesday Hope and Help for Your Nerves: Managing Anxiety.” 7 p.m. Multipurpose Room 43, ARC Centering. 

11 Wednesday Around the World Wednesdays: 9:30 a.m.-noon Sparks Museum. Crafts and activities from around the world. 52 donation. Sparks Museum.
Forest Glen Hiking Trip. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Forest Glen. More info or to register: 333-9780. Campus Recreation.

12 Thursday CITES Security Laptop Clinic. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. College of Engineering. More info or to register: 333-9780. Campus Recreation.
Symposium: “Turkish Diaspora, Turkish Communities.” Kemal Karpat, University of Wisconsin, Deniz Balgams, University of Wisconsin, Aydin Gezici, Central Michigan University, and Kristen Ghodsee, Bowdoin College. 1:30 p.m. Ella Lounge. 1010 Foreign Languages Building. South Asia and Middle Eastern Studies: European Union Center: Russian, East European, and Eurasian Center; and Center for Global Studies.

13 Friday 10th Generative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition Conference. Featured speakers include Alan Jeffs, University of Pittsburgh; Rosamund Shalikova, University of Iowa, and Antonella Soave, University of Edinburgh. 8:30 a.m. Illini Union. More info or to register: http://helios.uiuc.edu/atremlab/gala10/.
Educational Psychology, French, Linguistics, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese: Literature, Cultures, and Linguistics; and Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education Program.
Open House: ExploraACES. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Event is designed to acquaint prospective students and their families with the college. More info: http://becks.illinois.edu/explo/ACES/.
Horseback Riding Instructional Clinical. 1:3-5 p.m. Stable near Lodge E. (west of Champaign). More info or to register: 333-9780. Campus Recreation.

Symposium: “Teaching Painting.” Gary Xiu, Joel Ross, Terri Weissman, Suzanne Hudson and Jonathan Fineberg, UI. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. 62. Levis Faculty Center.
Open House: ExploraACES. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Event is designed to acquaint prospective students and their families with the college. More info: http://becks.illinois.edu/explo/ACES/.

February Job Market

CAREERS AND EMPLOYMENT AT THE UI • www.uiuc.edu/goto/jobs

ACADEMIC HUMAN RESOURCES
Suite 420, 807 S. Wright St. MC-310 • 333-6747
Listings of academic professional and faculty member positions can be reviewed during regular business hours or online. For faculty, academic professional and other academic positions: www.uiuc.edu/goto/acjobsearch

STAFF HUMAN RESOURCES
52 E. Gregory Drive, MC-562 • 333-3035
Information about staff employment opportunities is online at www.pso.uiuc.edu.

Paper employment applications or paper civil service exam requests are no longer accepted by SHR. To complete an online employment application and to submit an exam request, visit the online Employment Center: www.uiuc.edu/goto/civilservicetests

Mary P. Froilke, Sandy Weiss, Patrick Scott, Bruce Cole, Guozhao Zhang, 1 p.m.-4:45 p.m. Levin Faculty Center. More info: 244-3344 or www.ipr.illinois.edu. Center for Advanced Study; Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies; Department of History, Program in East Asian Languages and Cultures, and Program in Art History.


“Taming Your Cyber-Tooth Tiger: Managing Your Internet Usage.” 7 p.m. Multipurpose

Pamela M. Schraufnagel
CALENDAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

March 5, 2009

Room #13 in the ARC. Contact Center

18 Wednesday
Around the World Wednes-
days, 8:30 a.m.–noon. Spiegel-
Museum. Crafts and activities from around the world. $2 ad-
mission. Spiegel Museum
Secretary of State’s Mobile
Unit on Campus, 9:30 a.m.–
p.m. 314 Illini Union. Office of the Chancellor.

CITES Security Orientation
10–11:30 a.m. 406 Illini Union. Campus Informational Tech-
nologies and Educational Ser-
vices. Survey Research Seminar
“Survey Data Analysis.” Noon–1:30 p.m. Room 217, IL Coordinator
of Science Laboratory. Coordinator
Science Laboratory.

19 Thursday
Whitewater Rafting in Idaho.
Friday 8:30 a.m. To 8747.
Northwest Voyageurs.
Whitewater Rafting in Idaho.

March 6

“Children Just Like Me” Through May
Five galleries featuring the cul-
tures of the world. 
Spiegel Museum. 600 S.
Gregory St. Urbana. Noon–5
p.m. Tuesday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Wednesday–Friday; 10 a.m.–
4 p.m. Saturday, Noon–4 p.m.
Sunday.

“Something That Happened
Only Once” Through March 29.
Jean Luc Mably
Through April 5.

Audubon at Illinois: Select-
ions from the University Library’s “Birds of Amer-
ca.”

“A Desolate of the Humanities
Through May 8.
IPRRC. 805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Urbana. 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.
Monday–Friday.

“Calligraphy: Editing Old English Tests and the
Evolution of Anglo-Saxon in Print.”
On view March 6.
Rare Book and Manuscript Li-
rary, 346 Main Library.

English as a Second Language Course
7:30–8:30 p.m. LDS Institute
Building, 402 S. Lincoln Ave.,
Urbana. Weekly on Thursdays.

Library Tours
Self-guided of main and
undergraduate libraries. go to Information Desk (second floor.
main library) or Information Services Desk (underground library).

Meat Salesroom
1:30 p.m.–4 p.m. Monday.
Colonial Room.

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rary, 346 Main Library.
Obama speeches show influence from past presidents

By Craig Chamberlain
Social Sciences Editor

When John Murphy heard Barack Obama’s address to Congress last week, he also heard Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

Like those three presidents, Obama knows how to order and make sense of the world when he talks, how to clearly explain problems and lay out solutions, how to talk to voters like responsible adults, says John Murphy, a UI professor of communication who teaches and writes on presidential rhetoric.

“I think there’s a pretty direct train of influence from FDR to Kennedy to Reagan to Obama,” Murphy said. “All four talk to us in ways that respect our intelligence, that make us feel like we are worthy of being American citizens,” Murphy said.

All four also have been able, at their best, “to talk about who we are as a people, yet link that to specific policies … to link how what we did (as a nation) flowed naturally from who we are.”

Obama faced a tall order in his address to Congress, speaking to a nation anxious by continuing bad news about the economy.

“He needed to convince the American people that he is a man with a plan … that somebody competent is in charge,” Murphy said. To do that, Obama needed clarity and comprehension, and to get that he needed structure.

“Structure in a speech clarifies the world for the audience,” Murphy said. “The speaker wants to make the world in the speech as organized as he hopes he can make the world for the audience.”

Obama’s speech on Feb. 24 was “very clearly structured,” and largely because of that, Murphy believes, very successful. The president introduced three themes that ran throughout: confronting the problems directly, addressing them responsibly, and taking action. He then applied those themes in six topic areas and tied them together.

“Anytime you bring up a problem in a speech, people sort of expect a solution,” Murphy said. “And Obama builds off of those audience expectations. So in each one of those areas he says here’s the difficulty we face, here’s the solution, and how it will work.”

Obama has drawn from Abraham Lincoln in other types of speeches, which called for more symbolism or ceremony.

This week’s speech, however, most resembled Franklin Roosevelt’s first inaugural and the banking crisis address he gave soon after, Murphy said. Like those speeches, Obama’s was direct in laying out the problems faced, and in making the case for action, Murphy said. Obama did this not only through structure and tone, but also in the use of similar words, Murphy said. FDR in one speech said “frankly and boldly”; Obama said “frankly and directly” and “boldly and wisely.”

A year ago, as Obama drew large crowds to campaign rallies, his rhetoric was often described as inspirational and soaring. Even though a compliment to his skills as a speaker, it often implied a reliance on emotion rather than reason.

According to Murphy, that was often the charge against Reagan. “Yet you go back and read Reagan’s speeches, and they tend to include a significant amount of evidence, they make claims, they make arguments,” Murphy said.

“What truly gets ignored sometimes is that Obama trusts the rationality of the American people. He trusts that if he explains things clearly, we will respond to him,” Murphy said. “He talks to us like we’re adults, and that’s a rare quality.”

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—John Murphy

Presidential rhetoric. John Murphy, a professor of communication, says the keys to Obama’s speeches are clarity, structure and making sense of the world.

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