Team forest waste to develop cheaper supercapacitors

By Diana Yates
Life Science Editor

Researchers report that wood-biochar supercapacitors can produce as much power as today’s activated-carbon supercapacitors at a fraction of the cost — and with environmentally friendly byproducts.

The report appears in the journal Electrochimica Acta.

“Supercapacitors are power devices very similar to our batteries,” said study leader Junhua Jiang, a senior research engineer at the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center at the U. of I. While batteries rely on chemical reactions to produce sustained electrical energy, supercapacitors collect charged ions on their electrodes (in this case, the biochar), and quickly release those ions during discharge. This allows them to supply energy in short, powerful bursts — during a camera flash, for example, or in response to peak demand on the energy grid, Jiang said. “Supercapacitors are ideal for applications needing instant power and can even provide constant power — like batteries, but at lower cost,” he said. They are useful in transportation, electronics and solar- and wind-powered energy storage and distribution.

Many of today’s supercapacitors use activated carbon — usually from a fossil-fuel source, Jiang said. “Costly and complicated procedures are normally used to develop the microstructures of the carbon — to increase the number of pores and optimize the pore network,” he said. “This increases the surface area of the electrode and the pores’ ability to rapidly capture and release the ions.”

In wood-biochar supercapacitors, the wood’s natural pore structure serves as the electrode surface, eliminating the need for advanced carbon manufacturing and lab-scale equipment to produce pore structure. Biochar is produced by heating wood in a low oxygen chamber. The pore sizes and configurations in some woods are ideal for fast ion transport, Jiang said. The new study used red cedar, but several other woods such as maple and cherry also work well.

Expensive and corrosive chemicals are often used to prepare the activated carbon used in supercapacitors, giving the electrodes the physical and chemical properties they need to function well, Jiang said.

“The use of those chemicals will probably impose some environmental impacts,” he said. “This should be avoided or at least substantially reduced.”

Jiang and his team activated their biochar with mild nitric acid, which washed away the ash (calcium carbonate, potassium carbonate and other impurities) in the electrode.

The Illinois Sustainability Technology Center is part of the Prairie Research Institute at the U. of I. © L. Brian Stauffer

Leading the charge Researchers Lei Zhang, left, and Xinying Wang, center, with Junhua Jiang, a senior research engineer at the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center, are developing high-performance supercapacitors using wood biochar.

Cutting costs Any kind of wood can be turned into biochar by heating in a low-oxygen chamber. Some types of wood work better than others. Pictured, left to right, are white birch, white pine and red cedar.

Corncob pipeline This corncob supercapacitor generates enough energy to power an LED bulb. Wood biochar is easier to use in large-scale applications and has more energy potential.

The Illinois Hazardous Waste Research Fund and the HeteroFoaM Center (an Energy Frontier Research Center funded by the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Basic Research) supported this study. The Illinois Sustainability Technology Center is part of the Prairie Research Institute at the U. of I. © L. Brian Stauffer

Conversation on Undergraduate Education finding its voice

By Mike Holen enterthal
Assistant Editor

More than 480 faculty, staff and student leaders have already accepted invitations to join the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education, an effort started in October by the Office of the Provost to create a framework for implementing goals of the campus Strategic Plan.

“We’ve been meticulous about trying to engage every corner of campus,” said Charles Tucker, the vice provost of undergraduate education and innovation. “This is an opportunity for everyone — eventually even alumni and other off-campus stakeholders — to think about the nature of the Illinois undergraduate experience and help articulate what it means to be an educated person in the 21st century. We’re looking to identify a shared vision of our educational goals.”

The fall sessions are set up in focus-group fashion, with participants working in small groups to contribute and share ideas. Five sessions have been held, six more are scheduled before the end of the semester, and Tucker said more spaces are available if more people sign up.

Once all of the 90-minute sessions are complete, Tucker said, the team of some 60 facilitators, comprised of faculty and staff members and students, will merge the comments thematically, and by next semester produce a summary report. That report will be used to guide a second round of more focused conversations in the spring semester.

He said the spring “conversations” will recommend initiatives and action items in support of the three-year Strategic Plan, especially its broad goal of providing transformational learning experiences.

The Strategic Plan calls for leaders to “re-envision and reshape the Illinois student experience — by defining a new set of institutional-level learning outcomes, appropriate for a university whose graduates will contribute to solving 21st-century challenges of global and local significance.”

More specifically, recommendations in the report will coalesce around the themes Sitz CONVERSATIONS, Page 2

Noteworthy exercise Bruce Litchfield, an assistant dean in the College of Engineering, leads a discussion and records the comments on sticky notes during a session of the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education initiative on Oct. 25. Comments from 11 sessions will be used for a more detailed discussion of undergraduate education in the spring as the campus pivots toward implementing the three-year Strategic Plan.

Bright idea A new incentive program is rewarding campus units that have the highest reduction in energy use.

Midwest charm A new study shows that international travelers are drawn to Route 66 and the Midwest culture.

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The administration has not been immune to criticism. The University of Illinois recently submitted a list of 47 recommendations that are designed to streamline and improve university-wide administrative operations and “strengthen crucial relationships.”

Salary and health and pension benefits continued to be a special concern to university officials, he said, because they go to the heart of the quality of new hires and the recruitment, retention and stability of the university workforce.

He said Easter, along with the other presidents in the state university system, had endorsed the so-called six-point pension plan published by the U. of I.’s Institute of Government and Public Affairs. That plan calls for the eventual absorption by the university of some of the pension costs paid by the state.

Tucker said the conversations under the tier II system needs to be improved, he said. “The university may have to look into creating its own (interim) retirement system for Tier II.”

Tucker’s comments followed a comment during the question-and-answer session by Stephen Kaufman, a professor emeritus of Spanish.

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Reader comments and questions may be sent to editor@inside.illinois.edu.
On the Job

By Mike Helenenthal Assistant Editor

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art of Greg Milner’s job describing how to break stuff and oth-

erwise destroy objects.

So, who could blame him for looking forward to work each day?

“We get paid to break things and get away with it,” he said. “That really is one of the cool parts of the job.”

Milner is a research lab shop supervisor for the department of aerospace engineering and he’s one of a handful of people in the country who has ac-

cess to a rare universal testing machine – a giant press – that can exert 3 mil-

lion pounds of force (either pushing or pulling).

The press, built in 1930 and standing more than four stories tall, is one of just three of its size and capacity operated in the United States. It is used to test an object’s tension or compression.

“Somebody knew what they were doing when they designed this,” he said, noting how the machine and its capa-

bilities.

The press is used to test student-designed engineering structures and to calibrate all manner of weighing scales; it also is used, through contract, by companies seeking to meet National Institute of Standards and Technology certification (like testing the strength of a crane hook against national standards). Each year, Milner and his crew run a concrete-crushing exhibition for those attending the College of Engineering open house.

Shop personnel do much more than just break things, though; they also oper-

ate a fully equipped machine shop capable of manufacturing just about anything. The shop contains everything from lathes and mills to welding equipment, as well as a wire electrical dis-

charge machine.

The shop serves various campus depart-

ments as well as professors and graduate students working on research projects. For example, teams competing in an annual truss-building competition end up at the Talbot press to test failure loads and crown a winner; and campus researchers have used the press to compress miscanthus into fuel pellets.

“We support anybody on campus who needs us,” he said. “We can do any-

thing and everything, though the majority of our customers are graduate students.”

Milner said he enjoys working with stu-

dents, who bring their designs to the shop to be created and tested.

“A lot of them are nervous when they first come in here,” he said. “You learn how to deal with each student individually and just try to make everyone feel welcomed and relaxed. Sometimes the different names and languages can be a challenge, but the variety of students keeps it interesting.”

Another thing Milner likes about work-

ing with students is that he and co-workers rarely make the same item twice. Milner calls it making things in “ones and twos.”

“I like the ones and twos because I could be working on something one day and something entirely different the next,” he said. “I think I’d be bored if I was making the same thing every day.”

Milner has lived and worked trades jobs

in the Danville area for most of his life. He was born in Bismark, Ill., and currently lives near Oakwood, Ill., with his wife, Stephe-

nie. They have been married for 23 years and have two daughters, ages 17 and 23.

He came to the U. of I. in 2005 as a lab mechanic, was promoted in 2007 to senior lab mechanic and then advanced to an in-

strument maker position in 2009. He was promoted to shop supervisor overseeing two other employees in 2010.

Milner spent many of his formative years trying to decide what career he want-

ed to pursue. After high school, he enrolled in Danville Area Community College’s industrial maintenance program, where he earned several welding and machine op-

eration certificates as well as an industrial maintenance degree.

Meet the press

Greg Milner, the research lab shop supervisor for the department of aerospace engineering, stands in front of the U. of I.’s universal testing machine – a giant press that can exert 3 million pounds of force, either for pushing or pulling an object to test its failure load.

“I kind of fell into my career by accident, really,” he said from his office inside Talbot Laboratory. “I had no clue what I wanted to do until I realized I had always liked working on cars and doing things with my hands.”

The DACC classes – machining in par-


ticular – opened his eyes to the potential of what he could create with training, hard work and patience.

“It was a new experience and it made me realize how rewarding it is to create some-

thing useful from a chunk of steel,” he said. “I really opened my eyes.”

Off-work, Milner likes to fish and read – and, of course, make stuff.

“I still tinker around in the garage,” he said. “I enjoy working and staying busy.”

Energy awards program lets users keep fruits of their labor

By Mike Helenenthal Assistant Editor

L

ittle things like flipping the lights off or big things like replacing furnace boilers can equal respect under the new Campus Energy Conserva-

tion Incentive Program.

The new program, sponsored by Fa-

cilities and Services and the Office of the Provost, is an annual awards program that recognizes the most prolific energy-

saving buildings on campus.

Awards are based on a proven one-year reduction in energy use, as measured by the campus Energy Billing System and certified through the F&S Utilities and Energy Ser-

vices Division.

“The idea is to offer incentives to every-

one on campus to influence their energy-

use behavior and make them more aware of conservation efforts,” said Kent Reifsteck, the director of utility and energy services.

In addition to the recognition, winners will be allowed to recapture some of their energy savings and use the money to im-

prove their buildings – either aesthetically or by reinvesting in more energy-saving implementations.

“It’s something everyone can participate and compete in,” he said. “It gives them something tangible to shoot for.”

Buildings eligible to compete include academic, administrative and research space; so-called service buildings, such as F&S for example, are not.

The prizes are given in two categories: one level – the Occupant Action category – rewards those who adopt an energy-savings program for their buildings, such as an of-

fice drive to replace incandescent bulbs; the other – the Energy Advancement category – focuses on larger campus construction proj-

ects that lead to wholesale energy-saving upgrades.

For the larger campus-funded construc-
tion projects, first place is a percentage of the “cost avoidance” attained through their efforts. For the Occupant Action category, the first-place award is $50,000 plus the en-

ergy savings achieved.

“We run an energy analysis every year and compare the use from the reference year to the baseline year,” he said, meaning the annual awards will be based on the prior year’s usage, with the reduction measured by the average amount of BTUs of energy used per square foot.

Reifsteck said the awards programs developed as a way to improve the campus “conservation culture.”

“We wanted to find a way to give an in-

centive where you can share in some of the savings,” he said.

In last week, during Sustainability Week, F&S announced the first round of winners in the two categories. Reifsteck said the an-

nouncement was a test of sorts used to illust-

rate the process and raise campus aware-

ness for next year’s awards.

The awards are building based, mean-

ing ENERGY AWARDS, Page 12

ENERGY CONSERVATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM FY2013 WINNERS

Energy Advancement

1. Atmospheric Sciences Building, 53.3 percent
2. Spurlock Museum, 44.5 percent
3. Main Library, 43.1 percent
4. Grainger Engineering Library, 43.3 percent

Occupant Action

1. Undergraduate Library, 35.2 percent
2. Law Building, 35.1 percent
3. Christopher Hall, 30.6 percent
4. Henry Administration Building, 28.4 percent

Note: Percentages reflect total energy reduction
Seven major gifts to benefit Urbana campus

By the U. of I. Foundation

T

even private gifts totaling more than $13 million earmarked for the U. of I.’s Urbana campus were announced Oct. 18 during the U. of I. Foundation’s 78th annual meeting.

Six of the gifts were highlighted at the U. of I. Foundation’s chancellor’s dinner on Oct. 18:

■ A new seven-figure deferred gift from James and Candace Frame, of Fletcher, N.C., to the College of Fine and Applied Arts in support of University Bands.

■ $4 million from the Irwin Family Foundation to the College of Business to renovate the Surveying Building, which will be known as the Irwin Center for Doctoral Study in Business.

■ An outright gift of $5 million from Thomas W. and Mary Ellen O’Laughlin, of Champaign, will create the Thomas W. and Mary Ellen O’Laughlin Fund for the Center for Business and Public Policy in the College of Business.

■ An outright gift of $1 million from Andrew Yang, of Los Gatos, Calif., will create the Andrew W. Yang Research Award to fund graduate student fellowships in the department of electrical and computer engineering in the College of Engineering.

■ An outright gift of more than $1 million from Sanjay K. Srivastava, of Los Altos, Calif., through the Srivastava Foundation, will support construction of the new Electrical and Computer Engineering Building. The Senior Design Laboratory will be named in his honor.


Additionally, major support from Richard S. and Loan B. Hill, of Atherton, Calif., was announced at the foundation’s business meeting Oct. 18. The Hills were recognized for their gift to establish scholarships in the College of Veterinary Medicine and the construction of the new ECE Building and endowed the Richard K. Williams Professorship in Power Semiconductor Electronics.

ATLAS, a 30-year, $60 million agreement from State Farm to renovate Assembly Hall, which has been renamed State Farm Center. The first major phase of the project is expected to begin in March 2014. State Farm Center is scheduled to be completed in time for the 2016-17 basketball season.

■ A $1 million commitment from The Grainger Foundation of Lake Forest, Ill., that establishes the Grainger Engineering Breakthroughs Initiative. The initiative covers faculty chairs and named professorships, undergraduate scholarships, world-class facilities and support for research.

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Among the newcomers to the Urbana campus are faculty members whose appointments began this summer or fall. Inside Illinois continues its tradition of introducing some of the new faculty members on campus and will feature at least two new colleagues in each fall issue.

**Stephanie Craft**

an associate professor of journalism in the College of Media

**Education:** Ph.D. (communication), Stanford University; M.A. (journalism), University of Missouri; B.A. (history), Washington University in St. Louis

**Research Interests:** News literacy, press practices and roles, media ethics

“Dr. Craft has established a national and international reputation for her research into media literacy and press practices and ethics and their connections to democracy,” said Rich Martin, a professor and the head of journalism. “She is a co-author of a new book that many believe will become the standard introductory journalism text in the future. In addition, she has proven herself to be a strong and dedicated teacher who will be an outstanding influence in our classrooms. We’re delighted and excited that she’s joined our faculty.”

**Courses teaching:** J405, History of American Journalism, and J250, Journalism Ethics and Diversity

**Why Illinois?** “The university’s vast resources – both human and financial – and support of interdisciplinary work are very appealing to me,” Craft said. “I’ve been so impressed by how open, friendly, helpful and productive people here are. I consider myself lucky to have the opportunity to be part of a world-class institution.”

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**David Molitor**

an assistant professor of finance in the College of Business

**Education:** Ph.D. (economics), Massachusetts Institute of Technology; B.S. (math and economics), University of Minnesota

**Research Interests:** Economic policy (health care delivery)

“David graduated from the MIT economics department in 2012 and spent the past year as a postdoctoral fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research,” said Louis Chan, the head of the finance department. “His research is especially timely in that it focuses on the economics of the health care sector, with particular emphasis on the economics of health care delivery. He has studied how factors such as physician location and migration drive technological adoption and regional differences in health care practice and cost.”

**Courses teaching:** FIN 580 sections GI, GI2 (Government Insurance Programs) and sections IT, IT2 (Individual Tax Policy) in spring 2014

**Why Illinois?** “One of the primary attractions to me at the University of Illinois is the Center for Business and Public Policy, where I am a research associate,” Molitor said. “As part of its mission to promote rigorous research on the effects of public policy on the U.S. economy, the center facilitates interactions among internationally renowned faculty across departments and colleges at the university, including the department of economics, the College of Business and the College of Law. The synergies between the center’s mission and my research interests in health economics are a primary reason I joined Illinois.”
The U. of I. Rare Book and Manuscript Library has acquired the literary archives of Gwendolyn Brooks, the first African-American to win a Pulitzer Prize and the poet laureate of Illinois for the last 32 years of her life, until her death in 2000. The archives, which had been kept by Brooks’ daughter Nora Brooks Blakely, comprise more than 25 books published, including one book of poetry in 1950 for “Annie Allen,” her second published book of verse (her first was the critically acclaimed “A Street in Bronzeville”), chronicling the musings of an African-American girl as she grows into womanhood. The centerpiece, “The Annaiad,” is a 43-stanza mock epic poem in which Brooks demonstrated her technical facility across the spectrum of poetic forms. Over her lifetime, she had more than 250 poems published, including one book of fiction, “Maud Martha,” and several books of prose. Today, she may be best known as the poet who wrote “We Real Cool,” a brief verse that has become a popular audio track on YouTube.

Brooks received myriad honors. Among them: She was one of Mademoiselle magazine’s “Ten Young Women of the Year” in 1945; named Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1985; received the Robert Frost Medal for lifetime achievement from the Poetry Society of America in 1989; and was awarded a National Medal of the Arts in 1995. However, Blakely said that the appointment as poet laureate of Illinois in 1968 was one of the most significant to her mother.

“When Gov. Otto Kerner gave her the post, she asked him what she would have to do, and he said, ‘Your responsibilities will be to commemorate with your pay’ – which was nothing,” Blakely said. “So mama set out to turn a definition of what the poet laureate was.”

She established her own poetry-writing competition for Illinois schoolchildren, reading each entry herself and funding the cash prizes from her own pocket. When she visited schools as a guest speaker, she signed autographs for anyone who asked. “She read at a school one time that had about 400 students,” Blakely said, “and afterward, she stayed and signed autographs for every single one of the 400 children.”

Born about a year and a half after Brooks received the Pulitzer Prize, Blakely grew up regarding her mother as a woman with an important job, but someone who could joke about the “75 honorary degrees she received from colleges and universities around the world (Brooks attended junior college).” It drove her crazy when I called her ‘Doctor Brooks’ kept a meticulous record of everything she ate, and occasionally added verse fragments, grocery shopping lists, and notes about trees.

She wrote at her bedside table or in the dining room. Blakely said, never with any set routine. “Her process was basically just kind of interwoven with our lives.”

Brooks was more disciplined about another type of writing: For the last 20 or 30 years of her life, she documented her daily food consumption in miniature spiral-bound notebooks, which Blakely included in the archives. “I think that’s one of the most surprising items overall in the archives,” Blakely said. “She was vigilant about tracking what she ate, and these became kind of like her life-books. There would be notes about something she had seen on television, an idea she had, grocery lists – all those different things pop up in the little notebooks.”

Dating back to the 1970s, the frequent mentions of brewers yeast, vitamins, dark cherries, blackstrap molasses and her homemade “greens juice” in these little books show that Brooks was health conscious, despite occasional lapses involving pints of ice cream.

Blakely, a Chicago public school teacher, said there’s a reason she chose to include these quirky mementos along with her mother’s literary papers. “She was one of Mademoiselle magazine’s ‘Ten Young Women of the Year’ in 1945; named Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1985; received the Robert Frost Medal for lifetime achievement from the Poetry Society of America in 1989; and was awarded a National Medal of the Arts in 1995. However, Blakely said that the appointment as poet laureate of Illinois in 1968 was one of the most significant to her mother.

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Brooks loved to watch soap operas, and never left home without an ample supply of Halls Honey Lemon cough drops and a big wad of tissues. (In the archives, her note- book of ideas for one of her most beloved poems, “The Life of Lincoln West,” contains a single tissue, used as a bookmark). “You want to know why I present her
Financial planning important for non-retirees, too

By Phil Ciciora
Business and Law Editor

A
n old workers increasingly contemplate delaying retirement or putting it off entirely, they should also consider the financial-planning options available in Social Security, Medicare and employment-based retirement plans such as IRAs and 401(k) accounts, says a U. of I. expert on taxation and retirement benefits.

According to a paper by law professor Richard L. Kaplan, such options are relevant not only to the non-retirees, but also potentially to a surviving spouse.

“Most retirement-oriented planning focuses on retiring early or at age 65,” said Kaplan, the Peer and Sarah Pedersen Professor at Illinois. “Very little attention has been paid to those age 65-plus who can’t or may not want to retire just yet.”

The paper, which was published in The ElderLaw Report, examines a number of planning options available in Social Security, Medicare and employment-based retirement plans.

For example, most people conflate filing for Social Security benefits and retiring from employment, even though they’re really separate decisions, Kaplan says.

“Once a person reaches full retirement age” – 66 years old, for most Baby Boomers – “he or she can receive undiminished Social Security benefits while still employed. The earnings limit that reduces such benefits ($15,120 in 2013) no longer applies when a person attains full retirement age.”

Another misconception is that required minimum distributions from employer-sponsored savings plans must begin after an older adult turns 70 1/2 years old. Kaplan notes that such distributions are not required if an employee is working for the same employer that sponsors the retirement plan in question. But distributions from any former employer are required.

“Even then, such distributions can be avoided if the funds in the prior employer’s plan are rolled into the current employer’s plan,” he said. “Not all employer-sponsored plans accept such rollovers, but it may be worth investigating.”

According to Kaplan, Medicare is much more complicated because each respective “part” presents its own issues.

For example, in Medicare Part A, once a person reaches age 65, there’s little reason not to enroll, he said.

“You paid for it throughout your working life, and many employers require that employees age 65-plus sign up for part A coverage,” Kaplan said.

Medicare Part B, however, is different.

“This component involves a monthly premium of $104.90 in 2013, and higher-income enrollees – those with taxable income over $85,000 per year – pay even more,” he said. “An employer’s coverage of doctor charges may be more comprehensive, and the employee’s out-of-pocket costs might be about the same.”

According to Kaplan, Medicare Part D’s prescription drug program is the most idiosyncratic component, and really demands a case-by-case analysis that considers the specific medications the person takes as well as the available plans.

“Moreover, both part B and D have delayed-enrollment penalties that apply if a person does not enroll in these programs at age 65 unless that person obtains comparable coverage from the employer,” Kaplan said.

Joseph Morris Butsch, 87, died Oct. 24 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Butsch was an electrician for the U. of I. for 26 years, retiring in 1986 from the Division of Operation and Maintenance (now Facilities and Services). Memorials: Champaign County Humane Society, chuhumanec.org.


Patricia Mueller Liebert, 69, died Oct. 28 in Sarasota, Fla. Liebert worked at the U. of I. for 14 years as a management methods analyst. Memorials: Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, (donation is for Sarasota Housing Authority, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34232, usarastoa.org).

Arnold E. Loschen, 81, died Oct. 14 at Gibson Area Hospital, Gibson City, Ill. Loschen worked at the U. of I. for 25 years, retiring in 1993 as a building service worker at McKinley Health Center. Memorials: St. John Lutheran Church, 509 S. Mattis Ave., Champaign, IL 61821, stjohn-lcms.org.

Darrell Alvin Miller, 85, died Oct. 29 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Miller was a professor emeritus of plant breeding and genetics who was a faculty member for 39 years, retiring in 1996. Memorials: Trinity Lutheran Church Norma A. Miller Scholarship Fund, trinity-urbanda.org; or the Darrell A. Miller Scholarship Fund, U. of I. Foundation, uif.uillinois.edu/Gifts/StartGiving.aspx.

Myron Merle Stipp, 80, died Oct. 30 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Stipp was a U. of I. police officer for 25 years, achieving the rank of lieutenant before transferring to the parking division, where he served as director for 10 years.


Lola Mae Weatherspoon, 81, died Oct. 25. Weatherspoon worked for the U. of I. for 25 years, retiring in 2002 as a clerk for the physics department.

Henry William Wyld Jr., 85, died Oct. 16 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Wyld was a professor of physics at the U. of I. for 38 years, retiring in 1995.
Nathan Gunn chosen to lead new Lyric Theatre program

By Dusty Rhodes

Internationally renowned opera singer Nathan Gunn has been named general director of the University of Illinois’ new Lyric Theatre program, which – like Gunn – will embrace a broad spectrum of vocal theater repertoire, from musicals to opera.

“Creating a title that best suited the job at hand was no easy feat, but I like the ring of it,” said Gunn, who is a U. of I. alumnus and voice professor. “I’ll be responsible for the artistic direction and fiscal integrity of the program.

“This program will combine the strengths of the School of Music, and the departments of theater and of dance at Illinois, enhancing the education of undergraduates and better preparing our students for the professional world. The fundamentals of singing, dancing and acting are more necessary than ever to be competitive in the world of musical theater, operetta and opera, and that is what we intend to give them at Lyric Theatre at Illinois.”

Jeffrey Magee, the head of the School of Music at Illinois, said Lyric Theatre will regularly engage guest stage directors, conductors, performers and composers, with the goal of providing students with not only the tools but also the connections they need to pursue performance careers.

“This will be comprehensive training for the singing actor,” Magee said. “Nathan’s leadership symbolizes that link between the university and the top shelf of the professional world, because he lives in both worlds. We’re hoping the networks that form through this program can help us carve a path for students once they graduate.”

Gunn’s personal performance schedule for the next few months includes touring Australia with Mandy Patinkin in November, performing the role of Papageno in “The Magic Flute” with the Metropolitan Opera in December and January, and starring as Figaro in “The Barber of Seville” with the Lyric Opera of Chicago in February.

But that doesn’t mean he’s absent from the U. of I. “He’s been with us on the phone, email and Skype quite a bit lately,” Magee said.

Other Lyric Theatre faculty members: voice professor Jerold Siena as artistic administrator, and accompanying professor Julie Jordan Gunn as director of Lyric Theatre studies. Siena, a tenor, has appeared regularly with the Metropolitan Opera and other prestigious opera companies, and has directed operatic productions for Arizona Opera, Florida Presbyterian College and Yale University. Julie Gunn – a pianist, music director, vocal coach and song arranger – has served on the music staff at the Metropolitan Opera’s young artist program, Wolf Trap Opera, St. Louis Opera Theatre and many others. She is the assistant director for development and public engagement in the School of Music.

Tom Mitchell and Rebecca Nettl-Fiol will serve as liaisons with the theater and dance divisions, respectively.

Lyric Theatre will take the place of the opera program that has been under the leadership of artistic director Eduardo Diazmuto for the past decade. Diazmuto has accepted the position of music director of the Conservatorium Orchestra and professor of conducting at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Australia. In his announcement of the creation of Lyric Theatre, Magee acknowledged Diazmuto’s contributions to Illinois. “We extend profound thanks for his extraordinary service to the University of Illinois,” Magee said.

A farewell party for Diazmuto will take place following one of the November performances of “Falstaff” at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

Ads removed for online version

Student survey: More than half experienced sexual coercion

By Sharita Forrest

More than half (53 percent) of young women have experienced at least one incident of verbal, physical or substance-facilitated sexual coercion – and more than half of those experiences are connected to sex in a variety of contexts, a recent study of high school and college students found.

The 335 young women who participated in the study reported that they had been coerced into sexual activities in a variety of ways, with physical and verbal coercion being the most common tactics.

Verbal coercion was linked to increased engagement in risky sexual behavior, such as not using condoms, potentially exposing women to sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

Given the disproportionate rates of sexually transmitted infection and HIV among young black women, understanding ways that pressured and coerced sex influence sexual behavior creates a more complete picture and helps to inform future research and culturally relevant prevention interventions, said Bryana H. French, one of the study’s co-authors and a faculty member at the University of Missouri.

French and co-author Helen A. Neville, a professor of African American studies and of educational psychology at the U. of I., conducted the research while French was earning her doctorate in educational psychology at Illinois.

Participants completed assessments about their experiences with sexually coercive incidents, including verbal coercion, such as a peer’s threatening to end a relationship with the victim; physical coercion, which was defined as partners threatening to use or using a weapon; and substance-related coercion – incidents in which partners encouraged women to use alcohol or drugs in order to take advantage of them sexually.

Participants who had experienced a sexually coercive incident were asked to indicate the outcome of that incident on a continuum of severity and ranged from nothing occurring to completed oral, anal or vaginal intercourse. Their responses were then added to obtain a total coercion experience score.

Participants also were assessed on their levels of psychological distress, self-esteem, beliefs in sexual stereotypes and sexual risk-taking behaviors, such as their number of sex partners during the prior year and their use of alcohol in relation to sex.

About 40 percent of participants reported that they had experienced some type of physical sexual coercion – a rate that far surpassed that found by a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention youth survey – and an equal number of women had experienced at least one form of verbal coercion.

These rates suggest a pervasiveness of unwanted sex for young women, particularly when the definition of what constitutes sexual coercion is broadened, the researchers said.

However, reports of substance-facilitated coercion were much lower than those found in other studies, and the researchers theorized that this might have been related to the sample’s youngest age, which averaged slightly more than 18 years for black women and just over 17 years for white women.

While the rates of sexual coercion experiences were comparable for black women and white women, French and Neville found differing correlates on black survivors’ and white survivors’ self-esteem and feelings of distress.

For black women, the total number of sexual coercion experiences and nearly all forms of sexual coercion had small to moderate effects on each psychological and behavioral indicator.

Greater numbers of experiences with substance-facilitated coercion were linked to both lower self-esteem and increased Six COERCION, Past 12
Baby Boomers and nostalgia buffs from Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom are getting their kicks on Historic Route 66 in Illinois, a new study of tourism related to the road indicates.

International visitors view the iconic highway – which was once called “the Mother Road” and “the Main Street of America” – as a portal to the nation’s cultural heritage and an opportunity to connect with the people that they believe personify typical Americans – the denizens of small towns and family farms in the heartland, said Zhuowei “Joy” Huang, a professor of recreation, sport and tourism at the U. of I.

“When Europeans travel on Route 66, most of their feedback is that it’s a very different experience from the big cities like Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C., which can all seem very much alike,” Huang said. “Route 66 reveals the inner beauty of the U.S. Midwesterners are friendly, easygoing and enthusiastic. They’re proud to tell you what they have in their community and are willing to share their heritage, their history and their stories. A lot of tourists enjoy that.”

Tourism officials at the state and local levels in Illinois are very interested in learning about and courting Route 66 travelers, especially international tourists, and initiated the study to better understand the market segment, Huang said.

Huang and study co-author Bruce Wicks, an emeritus professor in the department, surveyed more than 900 tourists – including 597 international travelers – who visited the city of Pontiac, Ill., between May and October 2012.

Travelers were surveyed at multiple sites in Pontiac, which was selected for the research because it is experiencing an uptick in its Route 66 tourism. Among other attractions, Pontiac is home to a museum and a hall of fame associated with the roadway that feature thousands of pieces of Route 66 memorabilia.

Promotional campaigns about the charms of Illinois’ Route 66 culture seem to have been successful in enticing Europeans to venture west. Europeans comprised the majority – more than 72 percent – of the international visitors surveyed in Pontiac.

Most were from the United Kingdom and Germany along with Australia. However, substantial numbers of travelers also hailed from Canada, France, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

International tourists “are very enthusiastic and spend many days on the road,” often staying several days in Chicago before following Route 66 to particular towns and attractions or traveling it all the way to California, Huang said.

“They are very interested in the culture of Route 66 communities. They often have very specific itineraries, travel guides such as Lonely Planet and maps to all these old communities so they can see where events happened years ago,” Huang said.

Domestic travelers from Illinois and other Midwestern states, especially people age 55 and older, represent another fertile market that tourism officials would like to cultivate. More than 27 percent of the domestic tourists surveyed in Pontiac were from Illinois, followed by Michigan (10 percent) and California (8 percent), with nearly equal numbers from Indiana and Ohio.

“Lots of Baby Boomers travel on Route 66,” Huang said. “We found that people over age 55 represent about 80 percent of the domestic travelers on Route 66.”

About 76 percent of the domestic tourists and 80 percent of the international travelers interviewed indicated that Route 66 was the focal point of their trip to Illinois.

While most international travelers said that they were on their first or second Route 66 experience (84 percent and 10 percent, respectively), 1.7 percent reported that their current trip was their 10th or subsequent visit.

An even greater percentage of domestic travelers – 6 percent – indicated that they were on their ninth or subsequent Route 66 excursion.

Springfield was cited most frequently as the Route 66 city that domestic travelers and international tourists had visited or planned to visit in Illinois. Chicago came in second.
Academic Leadership Program: Five named CIC fellows

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ive U. of I. faculty members have been named 2013-14 fellows of the Committee on Institutional Co- operation’s Academic Leadership Program. The program provides leadership development for accomplished faculty members who are interested in learning more about academic administration. It is designed to introduce faculty members to issues and challenges in higher education and offers them a chance to meet with leaders at CIC member institutions.

“The program really fosters connections to faculty in similar positions at other Big Ten universities and it gives the fellows a great introduction to what it means to work in higher education administration,” said Barb Wilson, the executive vice provost for faculty and academic affairs and the campus CIC liaison. “Each year we select a few faculty members from each CIC campus; the CIC comprises the Big Ten universities and the University of Chicago.

As always, those selected from the U. of I. campus are very talented and eager to start the process,” she said. “I will be working closely with the fellows throughout the year and look forward to watching their growth as leaders.”

The 2013-14 CIC fellows:

- Fouad Abd-El-Khalick is a professor and the head of curriculum and instruction in the College of Education. His research focuses on teaching and learning about the nature of science in precollege grades. He is co-leading a large-scale initiative funded by the National Science Foundation to prepare a new generation of science teacher leaders by integrating social and entrepreneurial leadership into existing modalities. He also maintains an active international program of research and development in Egypt, Lebanon and Qatar.

- Abd-El-Khalick served as an elected member of the executive board of the National Association for Research on Science Teaching (2004-2007). From Illinois, he received the College of Education Distinguished Scholar Award (2005) and Distinguished Senior Scholar Award (2011), and was named a University Scholar (2006-2009). He was recently elected as a fellow of the American Association for Research on Science Education. He has taught a wide range of courses in competitive strategy, marketing strategy, strategic innovation and econometric methods at the undergraduate, MBA, executive MBA and Ph.D. levels, and he has received numerous honors for his teaching accomplishments.

- Alejandro Lugo is a professor of anthropology and of Latina/Latino studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where he has been a faculty member for 17 years. Throughout his years at Illinois, his research and theoretical interests in gender, class and culture, the state (colonial and modern), capitalism, and colonial and post-colonial histories, as well as race and ethnicity, historically and in the present, have allowed him to recruit, guide and mentor a variety of doctoral students from diverse backgrounds, including U.S. minorities, European Americans or white Americans, and international students.

In addition to having served on more than 40 Ph.D. students in the area of electronic design automation. He has won several best paper awards from premier electronic design automation journals and at conferences. He has served on the editorial boards of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ Transactions on Computers, IEEE Transactions on Computer-Aided Design and the Association for Computing Machinery’s Transactions on Design Automation of Electronic Systems. In 2011, he received an ACM Special Interest Group on Design Automation Distinguished Service Award. He was a IEEE Distinguished Lecturer in 2005 and 2006. He is a fellow of the IEEE. Ann Young is a professor of music in the College of Fine and Applied Arts. She has presented harp master classes and lectures at festivals and conferences throughout the world, including seven invitations to perform at the triennial World Harp Congress. She has won international prizes in France and Japan and national competitions, including simultaneously winning first prize in the two highest divisions of the American Harp Society’s National Solo Competition. Exploring the connection between art and technology, she has premiered more than 40 works, and is half of the acclaimed Aletheia Duo.

Her articles on Henriette Renié and Elias Parish Alvars have been published internationally. She has served as assistant director of faculty affairs, string division chair, and on the executive committee in the School of Music since joining Illinois in 1999. She is a board member of the World Harp Congress and the American Harp Society and has previously served on the AHS executive committee. Since 2002, she has been the editor of the WHC’s official journal. She is the School of Music associate director of faculty affairs for 2013-14.

Fouad Abd-El-Khalick
Rajagopal Echambadi
Alejandro Lugo

Marta Wong
Ann Young

Inside Illinois
Nov. 7, 2013
Scholar: Empower Congress to bolster separation of powers

By Phil Ciciora
Business and Law Editor

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though it may not receive high marks these days as a public body, Congress should actually be empowered so it can uphold the constitutional checks and balances that help to curb overreach by the other two branches of government, a U. of I. expert in administrative law says in a newly published paper.

By adopting a doctrine of “complete delegation,” courts have systematically hamstrung the ability of Congress to influence bureaucratic decision-making, says Jamelle Sharpe, a professor of law at Illinois.

“I think that courts and legal scholars systematically undervalue the role that Congress should be playing, often because Congress doesn’t put its best institutional face forward,” said Sharpe, who also is the associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Law. “It may be a time of historic congressional disapproval by the public, but that’s why it’s important to step back and look at things – not necessarily at how things are working now, but at how they are supposed to work, and how they work best.”

The paper, published in the journal Administrative Law Review, contends that concentrating too much oversight control in the judicial or executive branches undermines the separation of powers the framers of the Constitution believed to be critical in preventing tyranny.

By adopting a policy of “partial sub-delegation” and giving Congress a judicially enforceable voice in how courts review agency policymaking, courts could increase political accountability and reduce the problem of “agency slack” caused by the broad delegation of regulatory powers, according to the paper.

“It may seem counterintuitive, given its historically low approval ratings, but there is a role for Congress to play in managing the work of the administrative state,” Sharpe said. “We should expect that Congress partake in that role, and that perhaps the courts should work a little bit harder to make sure that Congress plays that role.”

Legal academics and courts often think that once Congress has passed a law, the work of the legislative branch is essentially done, Sharpe says.

“One of the points I make in the article is that Congress’ powers are broadly divided into two groups – legislative and oversight,” he said. “With the legislative function of Congress, the ability to create laws, they look out into the world and see conduct they don’t like, or conduct they do like, and they pass a law discouraging that conduct or encouraging it. To most people, that’s what Congress does. It passes laws, the executive branch enforces the laws, and the judicial branch interprets and applies those laws to individual circumstances to determine whether a plaintiff or defendant wins a case.

“Other people get to deal with how the law actually lives – how it’s interpreted, to whom it’s applied, when it gets enforced, and Congress acts more or less like a bystander.”

But Congress also has an important oversight function, Sharpe said.

“This is something that’s well known to political scientists, but I think that it’s something that is undervalued by everyone else,” he said.

According to Sharpe, the courts have zealously guarded against congressional involvement in the way that laws are interpreted and enforced after that law has been enacted.

“I understand the inclination to prevent Congress from being involved in interpretation and enforcement, but my view is that courts have essentially over-corrected in their case law,” he said. “There is an important balance of congressional oversight that is evident in the constitutional scheme. When the balance is out of whack, you cede more power to the other two branches to oversee administrative decision-making in ways that can actually be detrimental both to the public good and to the political process.”

Part of the fear of congressional power stems from the founders, who looked at the British experience and in many ways consciously rejected a parliamentary style of government, where members of the legislature simultaneously served in executive law-enforcing positions, Sharpe said.

“The founders wanted to make sure that these powers were separated and would not commingle, because they thought that would make the legislature omnipotent and individual liberties would suffer as a result,” he said. “I can understand that impulse at the founding moment, but the idea that we would be exposed to the parliamen
tarian tyranny that the founders feared in the past seems strange today.”

Downplaying the role of Congress primarily empowers the presidency, Sharpe said.

“If the courts are the ones placing the limitations on congressional oversight, that empowers the presidency in ways that, in my view, counteract the separation of powers.”
Health insurance a dream for many single moms working part-time

By Sharita Forrest

Single mothers in the U.S. went without health insurance coverage for an average of more than nine months during the country’s most recent economic recession, according to a study by scholars at the U. of I. indicates.

“Our most important finding is that single mothers who ‘play by the rules’ by working, yet work part time involuntarily or in low-wage jobs, have a greater risk of being uninsured than mothers who do not work,” said study co-author Chi-Fang Wu, a professor of social work at Illinois. “If the Affordable Care Act – also known as ‘Obamacare’ – is defunded, this will likely continue. If society wants to ‘make work pay’ and ensure that single mothers are sufficiently healthy to pursue career goals and to care for their children, then Congress must continue provisions that provide universal health care coverage.”

The study examined the length of time that single mothers had no health care coverage across the 32-month period during and after the recession that began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.

Participants for the study were drawn from the Survey of Income and Program Participation. Participating states included 455 single mothers ages 18-65 who were interviewed between August 2008 and March 2011. The one-third of the mothers in the study sample who were adequately employed – those who worked full time or voluntarily working part time and earning more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level – fared best, going just over four months without insurance coverage.

However, the coverage gap widened to more than 10 months for mothers who experienced unemployment or involuntary breaks in employment.

Mothers who were underemployed – women working full time but earning less than 125 percent of the federal poverty level or involuntarily working part-time – went without health insurance coverage the longest, nearly 13-1/2 months, or about 42 percent of the time period studied.

The researchers suggested that single mothers who are unemployed may be less likely to resume insurance coverage quicker too.

“A lack of health care coverage and related health care problems increase health care costs and interfere with employment, intensifying the financial hardships that single-mother families disproportionately face,” Wu said. “Under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (welfare) regulations, recipients are expected to and do enter the workforce to provide for their children, yet many are able to find only low-paying and part-time jobs that provide less access to health care coverage, receiving unemployment compensation, Wu said.

The single mothers who went the fewest number of months without health insurance were those who had education beyond high school, were born in the United States, had health insurance coverage the longest among their unemployed counterparts have.”

In the absence of universal health care, vulnerable groups, particularly single mothers, are likely to remain at risk of going without health insurance, the authors wrote.

A link between underemployment and longer gaps in insurance coverage demonstratesthe likelihood of necessity for welfare policy reform to help recipients obtain adequate employment, Wu said.

Under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ controversial waiver program, states may obtain approval to waive the work requirement for welfare recipients who are participating in approved pilot projects aimed at improving work outcomes. Many conservatives oppose the waiver program because they believe it promotes welfare dependency and unemploy-

Wu’s co-author, Mary Keegan Eamon, is a professor emerita in social work at Illinois.

The study was published recently in the Journal of Women and Social Work.

COERCION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

psychological distress among black women.

Likewise, childhood sexual abuse was linked to lower self-esteem in black women as well.

Among white women, each form of sexual coercion was positively related to risky sexual behavior but not to lower levels of self-esteem, a finding that the researchers said was unexpected.

Endorsement of sexual stereotypes played differing roles among black women and white women who had experienced the highest numbers of sexually coercive incidents. Whereas lower endorsement of sexual stereotypes was linked to higher self-esteem among black women in this group, it was associated with higher levels of distress among white women in the same group.

Internalization of sexual stereotypes may affect how young black women view themselves as women in society, diminishing their self-esteem, but may lead white women to feel greater sadness or distress without influencing their self-concept, the researchers suggested.

“The results suggest that the pressure for young women to fit the narrow socially prescribed definitions of sexuality and relationships may further intensify the trauma of sexual coercion,” the authors wrote. “The unique relations to self-esteem and psychological distress for black and white young women, respectively, may suggest cultural differences in the ways that young women process these sexual stereotypes.”

“We thought it was important for the research to explore unique cultural processes of sexual coercion recovery rather than merely control for race or ethnicity as a confounding variable,” Neville said. “We encourage future studies to replicate and extend our findings by including potential mediators of differences, such as self-blame, and moderators variables, such as race-gender stereotypes, in understanding the relations between sexual coercion type and health outcomes.

The study, which is available online, appears in a recent issue of The Counseling Psychologist.

ENERGY AWARDS, FROM PAGE 3

ing several units might have to cooperate to initiate energy-saving projects, and that they are going to have to decide how to use the award money.

Reifsteck said the incentive system is only one of the ways the energy center is trying to encourage participation. “We continually have been working on our metering and collection systems,” he said. “It’s really been working well, especially outside of our campus.”

F&S will be making presentations about the program to building managers over the next several months to provide details and encourage participation.

Since 2008, the U. of I. has exceeded the goals in the university’s Climate Action Plan, which calls for a 20 percent building energy consumption reduction by 2015.

ROUTE 66, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Among international travelers, followed by St. Louis, Joliet and Dwight.

Beginning in the 1950s, U.S. Route 66 was gradually replaced by the interstate highway system and was decommissioned as a federal highway in 1985.

The department of recreation, sport and tourism is a unit in the College of Applied Health Sciences.

Inside Illinois

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Illinois is being recognized by Insight Into Diversity magazine as a recipient of its 2013 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award. Illinois was one of 55 schools honored by the magazine and received one of the highest rankings on this year’s list.

“The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has an unprecedented number of programs and initiatives in place that provide substantial opportunities for students, faculty and staff from all underrepresented groups,” says Lenore Pearlstein, the publisher of the magazine.

The award, open to all U.S. colleges and universities, acknowledges academic institutions that are proactive in demonstrating their commitment to diversity and inclusion. Specifically, the HEED award measures an institution’s level of achievement in broadening diversity and inclusion through campus initiatives, programs and outreach, student recruitment, retention, and completion and hiring practices for faculty and staff members.

“I am delighted that we have been selected as a recipient of the 2013 HEED Award,” said Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise. “This award highlights our Inclusive Illinois: One Campus, Many Voices commitment to a campus in which everyone feels welcomed, respected, engaged and included. I believe that diversity is inseparable from excellence and is the only way that society’s most complex challenges can effectively be addressed.”

With its Inclusive Illinois Campaign, which began in 2007, Illinois has been diligently working to cultivate a campus that embraces the differences of the people in the community and beyond.

The recipients of this award were evaluated on campus diversity initiatives, their accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities, services for the LGBTQ community, campus diversity policies, course offerings, services for veterans and student led diversity organizations and training programs.

“We have done a great deal at Illinois, but more must be done,” Wise said. “Provost (Ilesanmi) Adesida and I are committed to continuing to support existing efforts as well as initiating new ones to ensure that Illinois remains a leader in diversity.”

Congress, continued from Page 11

“I think that everyone can agree that the president is a pretty busy guy,” he said. “If you’re told it’s your political leaders who have to correct any administrative decisions, they’re the ones whom you have to appeal to. Well, when the courts have scaled back Congress’ involvement, you’re essentially left with the executive branch answering to everyone in the U.S.

“A better approach would be to allow for a more judicially recognizable and respected role of congressional oversight to countenance power, and to assist the president in serving the people, and make sure that the bureaucracy doesn’t run amok.”

Although much maligned, the institution of Congress is one of the primary avenues for protecting the freedoms Americans hold dear, so it’s important to protect its role relative to the other two branches of government, Sharpe said.

“But part of that protection is expecting more of what members of Congress do for us,” he said. “And so it’s not just that courts should interpret laws in such a way that allows for a greater role for congressional oversight. We also should expect that our elected leaders would undertake these responsibilities in a manner that is consistent with our wishes – and in a manner that we can understand, even if we don’t agree.”
Thursdays @ 12:20 concert series
Jazz combo, trombone group to perform
The Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology hosts Thursdays @ 12:20 concerts that feature performances by members of the U. of I. School of Music. This month’s concerts feature the Derrick Cordoba Jazz Combo on Nov. 14 and the U. of I. Trombone Consortium on Nov. 21. Performances are in the Beckman Institute atrium and run from 12:20 to 12:50 p.m.

Ron Schleifer to speak on Nov. 14
Ron Schleifer, a professor of English and of medicine at the University of Oklahoma, will present a lecture, “Law That Isn’t and How to Do It,” at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 14 in the Knight Auditorium of the Spurlock Museum.

The Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies
The Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies will host its fall 2013 Middle East Film Series, featuring films from Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Turkey. All screenings — at 2 p.m. on Sundays in the Knight Auditorium of the Spurlock Museum — are free and open to the public.

Intensive Foreign Language Instruction Program
The Intensive Foreign Language Instruction Program and the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities will be offered for French (9 a.m.-noon) Italian (1-4 p.m.), and Spanish (9 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m.). Intermediate-level classes, for those with two or more years of college-level instruction, will be offered from 5-8 p.m. in Spanish.

The cost is $300 for U. of I. students, $125 for U. of I. faculty and staff, and $150 for the public. Payment must be made at the time of registration. Participants are encouraged to register by Dec. 2. Cancellations after Dec. 16 will be assessed a $25 fee. There will be no refunds after the first day of class.

For online registration and payment, visit go.illinois.edu/IFLPUffersWinter2014. For more information, go to www.skcc.illinois.edu/connect/IFLHtml or contact axlachar@illinois.edu.

Multimedia show by Artisans 10 featured
The Illinois Union Art Gallery will feature the exhibition “Reflections,” by artisans 10, through Nov. 29.

Local actors to read children’s books
Some of Champaign-Urbana’s best actors will offer two presentations this year of “Words in the Wind,” their concert-style readings of children’s books. The first will take place at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 14, at Faith United Methodist Church, 217 S. Providence Ave., Urbana. The shows, organized by U. of I. theater professor Tom Mitchell, will raise funds for Illinois Public Media’s Book Mentor Project. A suggested donation of $10 per person or $20 per family will be requested at the door.

The performances are created for adults, but children might enjoy them as well,” Mitchell said. “It’s a chance for grown-ups to take secret pleasure in enjoying the concise stories and playful language in books that we only get to read when we are kids or parents with kids.” As in past years, he said, the performances will feature surprisingly funny and sometimes profound children’s books performed by excellent actors and musicians.

The second performance this year will give the actors a chance to share the excitement about the Book Mentor Project with a wider audience, he said. “Mostly, we have found that it is fun to perform these books, and we like to work together, so this gives us a second chance to do it,” he said.

Performers include Gary Ambler, David Butler, Kent Conrad, Cameron Cornwell, Barbara Evans, Kay Holley, Mindy Manolakes, Angela Marcum, Cara Maurizi and Christine Servce-Johnson. Three volunteers in the Book Mentor Project — Jessica Holmes, Joe Murphy and Barbara Riderour — will present “Caps for Sale,” by Ephry Slobodkina.

Other performances will include the books “How to Be a Writer in a Hollow Tree,” by Anne Shelby and Cor Hazelar; and “Cool Daddy Rat,” by Kristyn Crow.

The Book Mentor Project recruits and trains volunteers from local businesses, community service organizations and student groups. Book mentors visit Head Start and early childhood classrooms where they read a book and do a related activity with the children. Then each child can take home a copy of the book, with about 5,000 books provided to 720 families each year. The project also reaches children and families through online games and videos, DVDs, mobile apps, classroom math and science kits, and family nights.

Radio doc: Students interview veterans
When 12- and 13-year-old University High School students interviewed local Vietnam veterans last spring, the Uni students, said the changing nature of the military was one key thread in the program. Another was the anti-war protests that Vietnam veterans faced when they came home. “I think it’s beneficial to look at the moments in history when the military changed, like when it integrated,” Ron Prochaska, a retired U.S. Marine Corps officer and Illinois Public Media’s Dave Dickey, who also mentored the Uni students, said the changing nature of the military was one key thread in the program. Another was the anti-war protests that Vietnam veterans faced when they came home. “I think it’s beneficial to look at the moments in history when the military changed, like when it integrated.”
Charles David Keeling Lecture
Climate change discussed Nov. 14
Edward Maibach, a professor at George Mason University, will give a lecture in a series that honors Charles David Keeling, an analytical chemist at the U. of I. and a member of the National Academy of Sciences.
Maibach, the director of the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason, will discuss how climate change can affect Earth and people’s lives. His talk is titled “Public Opinion on Climate Change: What Is It, What Influences It, and Does It Matter?”
The lecture will start at 7 p.m. Nov. 14 in 100 Noyes Laboratory. A reception will immediately follow the lecture in the Quad-side foyer.
Maibach’s research focuses on public engagement in climate change mitigation and adaptation. He co-chairs the Engagement and Communication Working Group of the National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee of the National Academy of Sciences.

BRIEFS

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education

Dorothy Espelage, a professor of child development in the department of educational psychology, and Debra Bragg, a professor of education policy, organization and leadership, have been appointed Edward William Guggisberg and Jane Marr Guggisberg Endowed Professors at the U. of I.
Espelage has conducted research on bullying, homophobic teasing, sexual harassment and dating violence for 18 years and is a sought-after speaker for her expertise. Bragg’s research focuses on the transition to college of youth and adults, especially student populations that historically have not attended college.

Anjali L. Welton, a professor of education policy, organization and leadership, has been selected by the ACT Foundation as an “Ace” in the Aces Research Network, a collaboration, applied research hub of selected scholars and practitioners. Welton also is an Office of Community College Research and Leadership faculty affiliate. In upcoming research, she plans to look at how working learners who identify as people of color connect to learning resources and what structures are in place that enable them to make those connections.

Richard Gates, a professor of agricultural and biological engineering, has been awarded a Special Visiting Researcher scholarship by the Brazilian government through Brazil’s Science Without Borders program. Gates is a co-leader of the Animal Welfare and Environmental Systems Laboratory and the Bioengineering and Structural Systems Laboratory at Illinois. The program aims to attract senior foreign researchers recognized internationally as leaders in priority areas, such as engineering, technology and health sciences. Gates is one of 66 award recipients this year. Gates will conduct projects with Brazilian research groups and is expected to visit Brazil for up to three months annually for the next three years. The program funds a project in Brazil that includes a team of multidisciplinary researchers from several institutions.

Clara Nahstvedt, the Ralph and Catherine Fisher Professor of Computer Science, will be inducted into the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, Germany’s foremost academic society, in March. Nahstvedt’s selection is in recognition of her scientific achievements and impact on science. Nahstvedt, who is the acting director of the Coordination Science Laboratory at Illinois, has long been a leading researcher in multimedia systems, having made multiple seminal contributions in quality of service management for distributed multimedia systems.

Kenneth Christensen, a professor of mechanical science and engineering, has been named a fellow of the American Physical Society, an honor bestowed to no more than 1/2 of 1 percent of the society’s membership. Christensen’s research focuses on experimental fluid mechanics, including turbulence microfluidics, bio-fluid dynamics and multiphase flows. He is the director of the Laboratory for Turbulence and Complex Flows, a center for the pursuit of fundamental experimental research in a variety of areas of fluid mechanics.

Sheldon Jacobson, a professor of computer science, has been elected a fellow of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences for his lifetime achievement in the field of operations research. As director of the Simulation and Optimization Lab at Illinois, Jacobson is known for engaging lectures and clear articulation of difficult topics.

Marc Seltz, a parallel computing expert, a computer science professor, and a major contributor to the Message Passing Interface, has been named the recipient of this year’s Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’ Computer Society Seymour Cray Computer Engineering Award. One of the society’s highest honors, the award recognizes innovative contributions to high-performance computing systems that best exemplify Cray’s creative spirit.

OSUS

Lori Kendall, a professor of library and information science, has been named the president of the Association of Internet Researchers. She took office last month during the association’s annual conference in Denver. The international academic association brings together scholars from multiple disciplines—including communication, the social sciences, library and information science, the humanities, computer science and engineering—to engage in critical and scholarly research about the Internet. Kendall will serve as president for two years.
Fungus that causes deadly syndrome in bats is hardy survivor

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

After taking an in-depth look at the basic biology of a fungus that is decimating bat colonies as it spreads across the U.S., researchers report that they can find little that might stop the organism from spreading further and persisting indefinitely in bat caves.

Their report appears in the journal PLOS ONE.

The aptly named fungus *Pseudogymnosporangium destructans* causes white-nose syndrome in bats. The infection strikes bats during their winter hibernation, leaving them weakened and susceptible to starvation and secondary infections. The fungus, believed to have originated in Europe, was first seen in New York in the winter of 2006-2007, and now affects bats in more than two dozen states. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *P. destructans* has killed more than 5.5 million bats in the U.S. and Canada.

The fungus thrives at low temperatures, and spreads to bats whose body temperature drops below 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit) when they are hibernating in infected caves. Previous research has shown that the fungus persists in caves even after the bats are gone.

The new study, from researchers at the Illinois Natural History Survey at the U. of I., found that the fungus can make a meal out of just about any carbon source likely to be found in caves, said graduate student Daniel Raudabaugh, who led the research under the direction of survey mycologist Andrew Miller.

“It can basically live on any complex carbon source, which encompasses insects, undigested insect parts in guano, wood, dead fungi and cave fish,” Raudabaugh said. “We looked at all the different nitrogen sources and found that basically it can grow on all of them. It can grow over a very wide range of pH; it doesn’t have trouble in any pH unless it’s extremely acidic.”

*P. destructans* appears to create an environment that should degrade the structure of keratin, the main protein in skin,” Raudabaugh said. It has enzymes that break down urea and proteins that produce a highly alkaline environment that could burn the skin, he said. Infected bats often have holes in their skin, which can increase their susceptibility to other infections.

The fungus can subsist on other proteins and lipids on the bats’ skin, as well as glandular secretions, the researchers said.

*P. destructans* can tolerate naturally occurring inhibitory sulfur compounds, and elevated levels of calcium have no effect on fungal growth,” Raudabaugh said.

The only significant limitation of the fungus besides temperatures above 20 degrees Celsius has to do with its ability to take up water, Raudabaugh said. Its cells are leaky, making it hard for the fungus to absorb water from surfaces, such as dry wood, which have a tendency to cling to moisture. But in the presence of degraded fats or free fatty acids, like those found on the skin of living or dead animals, the fungus can draw up water more easily, he said.

“All in all, the news for hibernating bats in the U.S. is pretty grim,” Miller said. “When the fungus first showed up here in Illinois earlier this year we went from zero to 80 percent coverage in a little more than a month,” he said. The team led by U. of I. researchers that discovered the fungus in the state found a single infected bat in one northern Illinois cave, he said. Several weeks later most of the bats in that cave were infected.

Although many studies have been done on the fungal genome and on the bats, Miller said, Raudabaugh is the first to take an in-depth look at the basic biology of the fungus.

“Dan found that *P. destructans* can live perfectly happily off the remains of most organisms that co-inhabit the caves with the bats,” Miller said. “This means that whether the bats are there or not, it’s going to be in the caves for a very long time.”

The Illinois Natural History Survey is a division of the Prairie Research Institute at the U. of I.

This study was funded through awards given by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources State Wildlife Grants Program and the Section 6 Endangered and Threatened Species Program to the Illinois Natural History Survey.