Autism signs can be identified earlier than formerly thought

By Sharita Forrest
News Editor

A new technique to fight crop insect pests may affect different insect populations differently, researchers report. They analyzed RNAi interference (RNAi), a method that uses genetic material to “silence” specific genes — in this case genes known to give insect pests an advantage. The researchers found that western corn rootworm beetles that are already resistant to crop rotation are in some cases also less vulnerable to RNAi.

The study is reported in the journal Pesticide Biochemistry and Physiology.

“Our results indicate that the effectiveness of RNAi treatments could potentially vary among field populations depending on their genetic and physiological backgrounds,” the researchers wrote.

The western corn rootworm will likely be one of the first crop pests to be targeted with RNAi technology, said Manitoba-Seufert, a former U. of I. crop sciences professor who led the study with crop sciences graduate student Christian Scholl, who now is a research assistant at the University of Minnesota.

Early diagnosis Many of the behavioral and cognitive characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders can be identified when children are as young as age 2, suggests a new study by alumnus Laurie M. Jones, right, and Rosa Milagros Santos Gilbertz, a faculty member in the College of Education.

Autism signs can be identified earlier than formerly thought

The Early Childhood Birth Cohort Study included assessments and interviews with children’s parents, caretakers and teachers as well as observations of parent-child interactions.

While autism typically isn’t diagnosed until children are about 4 years old, parents often identify developmental concerns much earlier, when children are as young as 12-18 months old. About 95 percent of the parents in the study had identified problems and begun seeking speech therapy, occupational therapy and other treatments long before their children received an ASD diagnosis, Jones said.

“The big push in therapy services is for two full years of services,” Jones said. “Well, if you wait until they’re 3 or 4, which is the national average, you’re not getting them soon enough. They’re already in the school systems by then,” with unaddressed needs that put them at risk for academic and social problems.

Researchers believe that earlier diagnosis and intervention could help minimize or prevent some of the symptoms and behaviors associated with ASDs, such as the repetitive behaviors that are a hallmark of autism.

“The sooner that you can catch some of these behaviors and intervene, the better the chances for developing good skills and...
Board plans for possibility of state funding shortfall

By Mike Hohenhaus

U

A of leaders, aware that the expira-
nation of a temporary state income 

tax rate hike that would lead to reductions in the state’s education budget, will spend this spring lobbying legislators for level university funding.

If the temporary increase is phased out, the Illinois Board of Higher Education pred-

ictsthat the state will cut the university’s fund-

ing share by 12.5 percent, U. of I. President Bob Easter said at their March 6 meeting in light of President 

nounced its intention to form the committee 

at its March 6 meeting. Nomi-

nization distributed at the 

lab is expected to “bring together the best 

units, and universities and community col-

legegoes. Illinois companies, civic and government 

that are the keys to progress and economic 

ional space for undergraduate chemistry students. The $24.8 million project is 

n the Interest rate of 4.76 percent the 

ndergraduate chemistry students. The $24.8 million project is 

an annual 7.9 percent increase in revenue. 

There’s going to be a lag because we’re 

in a transition,” he said. “But we’re setting 

some pretty ambitious goals and we’re not 

ing up. We are remaining optimistic.”

Other business

“We encourage anyone from the re-

ased disciplines and who represent the diver-

sity of the campus,” Campbell said. 

He said the committee positions require 

a high level of commitment by anyone who volunteers.

“Nominations who are placed on the final 

list must be willing to attend search com-

mittee-related meetings in the period April to 

December, including overnight interviews 

near major airports,” he said.

The board of trustees also has asked the 

committee to develop a statement “outlin-

ing the structure and mission of the univer-

sity, the role of the chancellor, challenges and expectations that the new president 

may face and personal qualifications nec-

essary for the position.”

The board has indicated it wants to have the committee formed and active by May, 

Craig Chamberlain, media, international 

relations, arts, humanities, library, 

Diana Yates, agriculture, applied health 

sciences, life sciences

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On the Job

Julie Pioletti
Assistant Editor

Julie Pioletti, the office manager for the U. of I.'s men’s basketball team, has job expectations like anyone else: Be prepared to lace up your sneakers every day, push the ball up the court when you can, and use hard work and opportunity in the face of adversity.

Do all that and the team succeeds.

I haven’t learned how to coach or officiate yet,” she joked, though during busy periods she has been known to dribble behind her back.

What has she learned in her nine years running the office?

“It takes a whole lot to put on a basketball game,” she said. “And the coaches and the players work a lot more than just at practice and games. I’ve become more of a fan than I used to be. Working here, you can’t really help it.”

Pioletti said she is amazed by the fact that the coaches and players are able to stay so upbeat and focused – even after a loss.

“I thought it would probably be a temporary fix,” she said. “But I do believe it’s stayed that way and I can make the coaches’ lives easier, which I hope makes the program better,” she said. “Even when I’m not there, if somebody needs something, they can call.”

Another 10 programs at Illinois ranked within the top 10 nationally: aerospace/aeronautical engineering (No. 6), a number of programs were rated within the top 10 nationally: aerospace/aeronautical engineering (7), biological/agricultural (2), computer engineering (5), electrical/electronic/communications (4), environmental/environmental health (3), materials (2), mechanical (5), and mineral (5).

Within the department of physics graduate program moved up seven places, to No. 35; law years ago. Undergraduate program rankings in the top five; 10 more were ranked in the top 20 over time for both undergraduate and graduate programs also are online, go.illinois.edu/USNews.

On the Job features U. of I. staff members. To nominate a civil service employee, email mhelenth@illinois.edu.

Becoming a mom and giving me the freedom of being a basketball player was everything to me,” she said. “I think being so far from home, these guys appreciate it. I know they’ve never turned down cookies or a cake.”

Pioletti travels with the team when possible and she’s on call during the season for ticket and other requests, so her hours can be irregular.

“The hours aren’t terrible, but it’s not always 9 to 5, either,” she said. “One thing I’ve learned is there is no off-season around here.”

As soon as the playing season ends, the recruiting process begins. She assisted in packaging for the upcoming season.

Pioletti’s office abuts the practice court in the UIUC Coliseum, and the sounds of whirls blowing, loose-ball fouls and players seeking an audience in the coach’s office offer continual potential for distraction. That’s where the facing adver-sity part comes in, and she is able to somehow separate the game from the job.

“I don’t really even hear it (the whirls at practice),” she said. “If I listened to everything that goes on around here, I wouldn’t get anything done.”

She said the program has gotten a lift from Groce’s boundless positive energy.

“He is such a motivator and not just for the players,” she said. “He makes you want to get better every day and not let him down. It’s really been amazing to watch and be a part of.”

Pioletti’s first 10 years of U. of I. service was with Personnel Services (now Staff Human Resources). She worked in assistant administration and grading civil service tests.

“At that point, I didn’t know what I wanted to do,” she said, noting she worked both in an office and in the university job.

“The university had a position for me, but I thought it would probably be a temporary thing I was just here until I figured out what I wanted to do.”

Some of her workload focused on serv-ing the university police department, which led to her taking an office assistant’s job serving the captain of the department’s pa-trol division, where she stayed for seven years.

“I was ready for a change at that point,” she said. “The highlight of my time in the police department was when Bill Clinton came to town.”

That meant dealing with Secret Service requests in addition to other duties added because of the event.

From there she moved to the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics and she took a position involving office work and marketing.

“There was a lot of work with corporate sponsorships, which was entirely foreign to me,” she said.

In seven years there she helped coordi-nate group tailgate parties and assisted with media contracts. It also was during the Memorial Stadium renovation, which meant plenty of deadlines and endless loose ends that needed tying.

“I’ve been fortunate in every job I’ve had here to have worked with and learned from a lot of good people,” she said.

In 2007, she was contacted by DIA officials about the men’s basketball opening, but Pioletti wasn’t convinced the job was right for her.

“I really loved my other job and didn’t know if I wanted to leave,” she said. “I interviewed just because. It ended up sounding like a great opportunity and it was.”

Pioletti has two grown children; her husband of nine years, Pat, has three.

A soft touch

Julie Pioletti, a 30-year university employee who has managed the men’s basketball team office for nine years, is more likely to lend a first bake than a fist break. In addition to regular office duties, she goes out of her way to be the team mom – baking goodies for players on their birthdays and supplying a hug when needed. She said she’s been most amazed at the numerous details it takes just to play a basketball game.

March 20, 2014

InsideIllinois
You have been researching bracketology for some time. What has some of your research shown about which team makes it to the championship?

Obviously, survival in the early rounds is critical to having a chance to win the national championship. So being highly seeded is important in the early rounds. Yet the biggest obstacle to a perfect bracket is predicting upsets. What have you found about upsets?

The number of upsets that occur is quite predictable, based on the seeds of teams. For example, in the round of 64, the 5-12 upset gets a great deal of attention. In the 29 tournaments from 1985 through 2013, the No. 12 seeds had a 41-75 record. What gets less attention is the 6-11 upset. In the 29 tournaments from 1985 through 2013, the No. 11 seeds had a 39-77 record. More than eight times more likely that no teams seeded No. 11 or lower reached the Sweet Sixteen. Sixteen, with an average of 3.41 of these upsets.

What have you found about upsets in the round of 32 and the Sweet Sixteen?

In the round of 32, teams seeded No. 7 and lower continue to advance. In 25 of the past 29 tournaments, two or more of these teams have reached the Sweet Sixteen, with an average of 3.41 of these teams reaching this round. In fact, only once (1995) in the past 29 tournaments has a team seeded No. 7 or lower reached the Sweet Sixteen. Moreover, in 25 of the past 29 tournaments, one or more teams seeded No. 11 or lower reached the Sweet Sixteen, with an average of 1.51. Among highly seeded teams, in 19 of the past 29 tournaments, eight or fewer teams seeded No. 2 or No. 3 reached the Sweet Sixteen.

The Final Four draws the most attention. What have you found about the seeds in that round?

Here is where people often make errors, since it is difficult to imagine teams seeded No. 1 losing. Our research compared the performance of teams seeded No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3, and showed that once these teams reach the Elite Eight, their performance against each other is statistically indistinguishable. It is more than eight times more likely that no teams seeded No. 1 reach the Final Four than all four teams seeded No. 1 reach the Final Four. Also, the probability that Final Four contains exactly one or two teams seeded No. 1 is about 0.70.

A Minute With ...™ Archives Recent interviews with U. of I. experts

Climatologist and meteorologist Steve Hilberg on a new way to measure winter's severity.

March 3, 2014

Collective bargaining expert Michael LeFebvre on college football players' union petition. Does it put the NCAA in a tough spot?

Feb. 24, 2014

A Minute With ...™ is provided by the U. of I. News Bureau. For archived interviews, visit go.iu.edu/arrwv.

Will anyone win the Billion Dollar Bracket Challenge, sponsored by Quicken Loans and Warren Buffett?

Absolutely not. Quicken Loans and Warren Buffett have deep pockets, but this challenge will do nothing to empty them. The odds against someone randomly picking a perfect 68 teams bracket are more than 147 quintillion (147 followed by 18 zeroes) to one. Even when taking into account the “sure wins,” the odds against picking a perfect bracket are still on the order of 1 trillion to one. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that anyone will ever pick all the winners through the First Four and the Round of 64.

Autism & Asperger's

Will anyone win the Billion Dollar Bracket Challenge, sponsored by Quicken Loans and Warren Buffett?

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Assistant Professor Sheldon H. Jacobson discusses the mathematics behind "bracketology" and shares his insights. Working with U. of I. students, he created the BracketOdds website, http://bracketodds.cs.i UNUSED_DATA
What causes potholes?

Potholes are just one of many consequences of road deterioration. However, we notice them mostly after heavy rains or snowstorms because of the water action. Potholes mostly occur in concrete pavement near the joints where water enters the pavement. Centerlines and edges are also more vulnerable to the formation of potholes. However, the presence of moisture can only cause potholes if accompanied with vehicular loading.

Asphalt pavements are made of a skeleton of aggregate (rocks) held together by asphalt binder in a special design. The asphalt binder, which comprises about 5 percent by weight and 12 percent by volume of the mix, is viscoelastic—meaning it is soft at high temperatures and brittle at low temperatures. The brittleness of asphalt binder at low temperatures can lead to asphalt cracks. These cracks start as hairlines, but they still allow water to enter, thus accelerating the damage.

In the presence of excess moisture, a complex process known as “stripping” causes binder to lose its adhesion. Freezing and thawing cycles accelerate this process significantly, possibly as a result of aggregate degradation. Stripping leads to distress, which causes “traveling,” or the separation of aggregate and asphalt binder; hence, the formation of potholes. Potholes could result from poor quality paving materials, improper mix designs or inadequate compaction, among other factors.

Has this winter been especially conducive to pothole formation? How do weather and snow removal efforts contribute to asphalt degradation?

The mechanisms of potholes are highly dependent on temperature swings, freeze-thaw cycles and the amount of precipitation (snow and rain). Sometimes, when pockets of trapped water repeatedly freeze and thaw with temperature swings, the expansion of frozen water pushes the pavement up, and when the temperature increases, water migrates away, leaving gaps or localized weak spots between the foundation bed and pavement-bound layer. Vehicles driving over these cavities cause the initiation of disintegration and accelerate the formation of potholes.

Snow removal efforts are considered nonharmful to original pavement materials. However, desiccating salt causes corrosion of reinforcing steel in bridges and sometimes in roads, thus ultimately resulting in the formation of potholes. If not done properly, snowplowing may cause occasional damage to fixed potholes.

What are potholes repaired with? Does it really fix the problem?

Potholes are usually filled with patching materials called “cold-mix asphalt.” The constituents of cold-mix asphalt are very similar to the existing asphalt concrete layers, but they have lower quality ingredients—namely rocks and petroleum-based binder. The cold patches are manually compacted using compaction rods; however, they cannot reach the density levels or the quality of existing layers. With low quality ingredients and density problems, cold-mix asphalt has a short service life and is usually considered a short-term band-aid that does not last more than one winter season.

For concrete potholes, there are proprietary cementation materials that can be more effective than cold mixes. All pavement types and materials are bound to deteriorate with time, age, weather and traffic loads. What matters most is the timely maintenance and preservation of roads. Timely intervention is critical to slow down deterioration, prevent failures and maintain safe and comfortable riding quality for prolonged periods of time.

Do you have any advice for motorists?

To stay safe and avoid damage to their vehicles, drivers need to slow down because potholes are misleading and can be covered with puddles. In the very near future, information on the physical condition of roads including potholes will be available in real time. Web maps and apps will become available in the near future to help locate potholes and will be connected to GPS devices for warning drivers of any potholes on the road.

A Minute With …™ is provided by the U. of I. News Bureau. To view archived interviews, visit go.illinois.edu/armw.
The story of a little-known volcano that changed the world

By Dusty Rhodes
Arts and Humanities Editor

The 200th anniversary of the largest volcanic eruption in recorded history will be marked by the publication of a new book by U. of I. professor Gillen D’Arcy Wood. If you think the title character might be Vesuvius, or Krakatau, or maybe Pinatubo, you’re wrong. Wood’s focus is Tambora — a mountain in the Indonesian archipelago that erupted so violently in April of 1815 that today, it is ranked as “super colossal” on the scientific Volcanic Explosivity Index. And the explosion was only the first dose of Tambora’s destructive power.

In his book, “Tambora: The Eruption That Changed the World” (published next month by Princeton University Press), Wood describes the cascading aftereffects, ranging from climatic cooling that occurred as Tambora’s immense ash cloud circled the globe to less intuitive consequences, such as a worldwide cholera pandemic, a boom in opium production and an economic depression in the U.S. The fact that people who lived through these chaotic consequences never realized they were caused by a remote volcano made Wood’s research challenging.

“It was really detective work, connecting the dots,” he said. “As a historian, I rely on contemporary documents from that period, and no one was making the connection at the time.”

An English professor specializing in the Romantic era, Wood fell into this research in 2007 while auditing a U. of I. course in contemporary documents from that period, Schlesinger explained that Tambora, on the island of Sumbawa, was rated a 7 on the VEI (by comparison, the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens rated a 5, Krakatau a 6), and was perfectly positioned, just 8 degrees north of the equator, to belch sulfur, fluorine and fine ash particles straight up into the stratospheric system of wind currents that circle the globe.

For Wood, who had long been interested in climate change, this conversation was a light bulb moment.

“I just couldn’t believe it,” he said. “When I began trying to research Tambora, I found bits and pieces, but nobody had written about this as a major global event. It’s as if this just landed in my lap.” He spent the next five years researching this book.

The initial effects of the eruption were brutal and mercifully swift. Archaeologists in 2004 discovered that villages on Mount Tambora had been instantly buried under several meters of pumice and ash. In one home excavated by a team from the University of Rhode Island, a woman holding a knife (probably preparing a meal) had been instantly turned to charcoal, “evidence of immolation at far higher temperatures than those generated by Vesuvius,” Wood writes. Within days, fallout poisoned the island’s wells, quickly adding another 40,000 deaths to the 10,000 or so villagers buried under the lava.

Tambora took an even larger toll in Europe and North America. Over the next three years, its aerosol film of stratospheric gases set off a chemical chain reaction that caused a 5 to 6 degree Fahrenheit temperature decline in some places, resulting in crop failures, famine and more deaths. In New England, 1816 was called “the year without a summer,” but Wood’s book also details the devastation in places that were harder hit. In Germany, 1817 was called “the year of the beggar.” In Switzerland, deaths outnumbered births in both 1817 and 1818.

In South Asia, Tambora’s cloud had the opposite meteorological effect, delaying the annual monsoon season for the summer of 1816 and eventually altering the chemistry of the Bay of Bengal. Wood uses a combination of historic accounts and modern science to show how this climate change produced a new and deadly strain of cholera that claimed 125,000 fatalities in Java before setting off on a slow journey around the world. Each chapter of “Tambora” tackles another unexpected consequence of the eruption — seasonal warming at the Earth’s poles, spurring arctic exploration; rice crop failures in southwestern China forcing farmers to resort to growing opium; an ice tsunami in the Alps inspiring modern theories of geology. In presenting the story of this little-known volcano and its everlasting effects on the world, Wood isn’t so much trying to bestow Tambora with its rightful place in infamy as he is using it to demonstrate what he describes as “the fragile interdependence of human and natural systems.”

In the epilogue, he suggests that the far-reaching effects of Tambora’s temporary climate chaos should serve as a cautionary tale.

“It’s like a perfect case study of the devastating impacts that even a short-term deterioration in climate can have,” Wood said. “Now, we’re entering a period of open-ended climate crisis. We can foresee increasing disruptions.”

As the director of the U. of I.’s Sustainability Studies Initiative in the Humanities, Wood’s English courses now have an environmental bent: The Ecology of Poetry 101, Green Romanticism 431 and New Directions in Eco-criticism 570. His lifelong passion for the poetry and music of the Romantic era has moved to the background.

“I can’t work without listening to music,” Wood said, “so I listen to a lot of Mozart. But in the time that I have left in my career, I need to devote myself to some small corner of the general sustainability enterprise.”

Global effects

Gillen D’Arcy Wood, a professor of English, is the author of “Tambora: The Eruption That Changed the World,” that documents the aftereffects of an 1815 volcanic eruption, the largest in recorded history. In his book, Wood describes the broad-ranging consequences, including climatic cooling, a worldwide cholera pandemic, a boom in opium production and an economic depression in the U.S.

The 200th anniversary of the largest volcanic eruption in recorded history will be marked by the publication of a new book by U. of I. professor Gillen D’Arcy Wood. If you think the title character might be Vesuvius, or Krakatau, or maybe Pinatubo, you’re wrong. Wood’s focus is Tambora — a mountain in the Indonesian archipelago that erupted so violently in April of 1815 that today, it is ranked as “super colossal” on the scientific Volcanic Explosivity Index.
Evaluating the educational value of religion in public schools

By Sharita Forrest

More than 40 years after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down sponsored prayer and scripture readings in the nation’s public schools, the role of religion in education remains a sharply divisive topic in many communities.


“Religion course” and “teaching about religion” are general descriptors for four different kinds of courses – Bible history, the Bible and its influence, Bible as literature, and world religions – that authors Walter Feinberg and Richard A. Layton explore in the book. Feinberg is a professor emeritus of education policy, organization and leadership at the U. of I.; Layton is a professor in the department of religion at Illinois.

Feinberg and Layton emphasize that they do not advocate curricular content that attempts to induct children into a specific religious group or that promotes an affiliation with a religious group or that promotes an affiliation with religion in general.

However, the authors believe that academic instruction that teaches about beliefs, practices and canonical texts of various religious traditions can be an appropriate part of the curriculum. According to the authors, religion is integral to the human experience, and religious curricula can prepare youth for civic engagement in an ethnically and religiously diverse society.

Public schools that choose to teach religion courses should teach them in a manner consistent with the analytic, interpretive and critical skills that are associated with the humanities. Like humanities courses, religion courses can serve as catalysts for critical thinking, reflection and personal growth, helping public schools fulfill their unique mission of constructing a democratic, informed populace.

“The aim of the humanities, from a civic standpoint, is to promote civic skills by changing the process of believing and thus preparing the ground for engaging different points of view in civically constructive ways,” the authors wrote.

Fostering appreciation for different religious traditions and examination of one’s own traditions opens students to the value found in a plurality of religions – and can provide transformative learning opportunities without inculcating particular beliefs, distorting the facts or violating individuals’ rights.

“At a time when different religions are playing such an important role in civic life throughout the world, citizenship and informed public participation require a greater understanding of the role religion plays in people’s lives,” the authors wrote.

Feinberg and Layton spent two years researching the topic, traveling “from the Bible Belt to the suburban parkway, observing classes and interviewing public school teachers involved in religion courses.”

Using case studies of several schools and communities in which religion courses are taught, the authors explore the academic merits and problems associated with each curriculum. The schools and communities – located in the Midwest, the South and along the Atlantic coast – are identified by pseudonyms in the book, as are the teachers, school officials and community organizations affiliated with the programs.

Curricular content, depth of classroom discussions and even the selection of instructors varied widely, and was often influenced or constrained by students’, teachers’ and the surrounding community’s religious values as well as teachers’ interpretations of their roles and fears about legal entanglements, the authors found.

“In many communities, there’s a tendency to implement religion courses for their perceived value as builders of good moral character or because they satisfy the interests of some particular segment of the community,” Feinberg said. “These courses tend to present the path to individual and collective development as closed, rather than developing students’ interpretive, analytic and critical skills to prepare them for membership in a constantly evolving, diverse public.”

Although some schools and teachers hoped to deflect controversy by teaching the Bible as a neutral history textbook, Feinberg and Layton observed that this approach discouraged critical inquiry, silenced classroom discussion and often focused on Christian viewpoints to the exclusion of other doctrines.

“Bible history courses were the most problematic type of courses in our sample,” Layton said. “The chief difficulty of these courses is the presumption that the Bible is a history textbook that provides unmediated transmission of the historical viewpoints of Israel and the early Christian community.”

Religion in schools: A new book by Walter Feinberg and Richard A. Layton examines the academic merits and complexities – of teaching religion curricula in public schools. Feinberg is professor emeritus in the College of Education. Layton is a professor of religion in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Bible as literature courses were the most academically promising, if teachers and the curricula promoted active interpretation, critical reading skills and students’ awareness of multiple possibilities within their own religious traditions, the authors wrote.

ON THE WEB press.umich.edu

Ads removed for online version
Saxophonists conference brings in both jazz, classical stars

By Dusty Rhodes
Arts and Humanities Editor

The U. of I. School of Music will host the North American Saxophone Alliance conference March 20-22.

Held biennially, the conference is expected to draw about 1,000 saxophonists – jazz and classical, amateur and professional – to participate in master classes, competitions and performances.

Featured performers include Jeff Coffin, a three-time Grammy Award winner with Béla Fleck and the Flecktones; former member of the Dave Matthews Band; Grammy Award winner Brad Leaman, lead saxophonist with the Harry Connick Jr. Orchestra; Frederick Hemke and Eugene Rousseau, who have appeared as recitalists and soloists with symphony orchestras and wind ensembles around the world; the U. of I. Symphony Orchestra and Wind Ensemble; the Harry Connick Jr. Orchestra; and the Capitol Quartet.

The conference opens on March 20 with a concerto concert featuring internationally known saxophonists Hemke, Clifford Leaman, U. of I. professor of music Debra Richtmeyer, Timothy Roberts and Rousseau performing with the U. of I. Symphony Orchestra and the U. of I. Wind Ensemble at 7 p.m. at Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

On March 21, Leali will join Grammy-nominated saxophonist and composer David Bixler and Grammy-winner Chip McNeill, a U. of I. professor of music, for a concert with the U. of I. Concert Jazz Band, also at 7 p.m. at Krannert Center. Coffin performs at 7 p.m. March 22 at Krannert Center, with Roy “Futureman” Wooten (drummer for Béla Fleck and the Flecktones) and conference co-hosts J. Michael Holmes, a U. of I. professor of music and solo and chamber musician, and Richtmeyer.

Tickets to these concerts are $12 for students, $18 for the general public, and are available through the Krannert Center ticket office at 217-333-6280; www.krannertcenter.com.

The conference will include several free performances. On March 20, the weekly Krannert Uncorked event in the lobby of Krannert Center will feature saxophonist Clark Gibson and his “old style” jazz sextet. Gibson has played with Edgar Winter and toured with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. At 4:30 p.m. March 22, winners of NASA’s jazz competition will perform a recital in the Krannert Center lobby. In addition, each night of the conference concludes with a “Jazz Nightcap” beginning at 9, also in the Krannert Center lobby, hosted by McNeill or one of the guest artists.

PESTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Illinois Natural History Survey is a division of the Prairie Research Institute at the U. of I. The U.S. Department of Agriculture funded this study.

As expected, the RNAi targeting DvRs5 reduced that enzyme’s activity in all three rootworm populations. But the treatment had less of an effect on rotation-resistant beetles (activity dropped to about 48 percent) than on their nonresistant counterparts (enzyme activity dropped to 24 percent).

The researchers were surprised to find that the RNAi targeting the gene att1 had no effect, or even may have aided rotation-resistant rootworms, which survived slightly longer than they would have without the treatment. The same RNAi treatment undermined survival in the nonresistant rootworms.

This does not represent an immediate concern for RNAi technology, the researchers said, as they tested genes that are unlikely to be used in commercial crops. But the study does offer important insights into the complexity of insect biology, Seufferheld said.

“Nature is not static, but interactive and dynamic,” he said. “As we better understand the relationships between broad-scale human changes to crop diversity and the insects that feed on those crops, this knowledge will help us develop better pest-management strategies that are more in tune with nature.”

The findings suggest that targeting a single gene to control a pest species is not the best strategy, Spencer said.

“We now know that disrupting a particular target gene may enhance undesirable pest characteristic, such as rotation resistance, while also undermining desirable traits,” he said. “With insecticides, our instruments of destruction were relatively crude and unfocused,” he said. “With RNAi, we are trying to subtly subvert important processes very precisely to bring about pest death.” Such precision requires “a deeper appreciation of how the system works,” he said. “This study shows how variation among crop varieties is not static, but interactive and dynamic.”

This is important evidence that insect populations vary in their response to RNAi and might be influenced by other selective events,” Pittendrigh said. The findings might be of interest to agricultural biotech firms that are hoping to add RNAi to their pest-killing arsenals, he said.

“The Illinois Natural History Survey is a division of the Prairie Research Institute at the U. of I. The U.S. Department of Agriculture funded this study.”

Inside Illinois
March 20, 2014
**brief notes**

**Governor’s Sustainability Award Program**

Apply now for sustainability awards

Applications are now being accepted for the 2014 Illinois Governor’s Sustainability Awards Program. The program is the state’s premier honor for achievements in protecting the environment, helping sustain the future and improving the economy. Applications must be submitted online at www.istc.illinois.edu/info/govs_awards.cfm. The deadline is 5 p.m. May 15.

Begun in 1987, the award program is the nation’s oldest continuing pollution prevention program. Any Illinois public or private organization is eligible to apply for the award. The awards will be presented in the fall in the Chicago area. Last year, 27 businesses and organizations were recognized for their significant efforts within their organizations, according to Kevin O’Brien, the director of the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center, which administers the award. ISTC is a division of the Prairie Research Institute.

**Chambana Science Café**

**BPA effects to be discussed**

Renee Sadowski, a postdoctoral fellow in the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, will discuss her research on Bisphenol A (BPA) and its health effects as part of the Chambana Science Café lecture series. She will speak at 5:30 p.m. April 2 in Robeson Pavilion Room C at the Champaign Public Library, 200 W. Green St., Champaign.

The series offers informal gatherings that bring scientists before the public to talk about their work and answer questions. Future presentations include entomology professor Terry Harrison (May 7) and pathology professor Greg Freund (June 4).

The Chambana Science Café is sponsored in part by the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. For more information about this year’s local festival, visit library.illinois.edu/ediblebooks.

**Edible Book Festival is April 1**

The University Library will host the Ninth Annual Edible Book Festival on April 1 at the University YMCA. The event, a unique intersection of the book arts and cuisine, will be open to the public beginning at 11:30 a.m. A welcome and commentary by local celebrity judges takes place at 12:15 p.m.; consumption of entries starts at 12:45 p.m.

Edible art entries have a connection to books as shapes or content. Prizes will be awarded for the best culinary creations. Examples of entries last year: “As I Lay Frying,” “The Bundt for Red October,” “The Pie Who Loved Me” and “The Lord of the Fries.”

“It is amazing to see the edible masterpieces people come up with to celebrate classics and childhood favorites, or to tickle us with their sense of humor,” said Daniel Tracy, a visiting librarian and information science and research support services librarian and the coordinator of the festival.

“Every year we feature a special rotating award, and this year we celebrate intellectual freedom with ‘Best Entry Based on a Banned Book’ as our special category.”

This year’s festival is hosted by the University YMCA and sponsored by the University Library.

Judges will be Donna Hacker Smith, a Lutheran pastor and book lover; Eric Woller, the owner of MeMe’s Treat Boutique in St. Joseph; and Paul Young, the graphic design program director at Parkland College and the treasurer of the Champaign-Urbana Design Organization.

For more information about this year’s local festival, visit library.illinois.edu/ediblebooks.

**CITES**

**Windows XP support ends April 8**

Twelve years after the release of the Windows XP operating system, Microsoft will end all support for it on April 8.

After this date, Microsoft will no longer provide security updates to Windows XP. Any computer running XP will have a significantly higher risk of being infected with a virus or other malware, potentially exposing personal information or being used to attack other computers and websites.

To protect U. of I. users and university resources and to comply with campus policy, the Office of Privacy and Information Assurance will begin blocking computers with Windows XP from the campus network after April 8. A blocked computer will not be able to access the Internet, internal campus sites or other campus resources.

This means that if you use a computer with Windows XP on campus or connect to campus resources through VPN after April 8, the computer will be blocked.

If you are using a Windows XP computer from off-campus it will continue to run, but you will be putting yourself and any information stored on the computer at risk. Because of this risk, you should not store any university data on a Windows XP machine, even if it is located off-campus. For more information about Windows XP at the U. of I., visit go.illinois.edu/xp.

**NCSA**

Faculty invited to apply for fellowships

U. of I. faculty members are invited to apply for the National Center for Supercomputing Applications Faculty Fellowship program, which provides seed funding to support demonstration or start-up projects, workshops and other activities.

The fellowship program is intended to catalyze long-term research collaborations between campus academic/research units and NCSA that will address problems of national significance that require cooperation between multiple disciplines and the application of cutting-edge and future technologies in computation, data, networks, software and visualization. Fellows will play an integral role in planning and developing such activities.

See BRIEFS, PAGE 10.
Tickets are now on sale for this year’s Roger Ebert Film Festival, April 23-27 at Champaign’s Virginia Theatre and the U. of I. campus.

Also featured as part of the 16th annual Ebertfest will be “Life Itself,” a documentary about Roger Ebert directed by “Hoop Dreams” director Steven James, and “Living in Exile,” a film about Olympia Dukakis. Ebert died last April, two weeks prior to the 2013 festival. This year’s festival continues in the tradition of screening films that have been overlooked, either by critics, distributors or audiences, or because they come from overlooked genres or formats, such as documentaries. Many of this year’s films came from lists developed by Steve James, one of Ebert’s associate editors for the past 15 years. His newspaper and trade journal archives

The History, Philosophy and Newspaper Library recently announced a free online archive of digitized historic newspapers and trade journals. The Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections, organized in four different collections, is available at http://idnc.library.illinois.edu.

ON THE WEB

Tickets will be available through the theater box office (217-356-9063) and online through the theater website (thevirginia.org). The price will be $14 each for regular admission and $12 each for students and senior citizens. Sales will be limited to four passes per person. The box office is open 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

The festival passes, covering all screenings during the five-day event, went on sale in November. As of this week, a few passes were still available.

WILL-TV celebrates 50 years of programing with “Medora,” a deeply personal look at small-town America—particularly Medora, Ind., where the local community, they documented a year in the life of some of the players and coaches.

The rest of the 12 films, as well as additional guests and events, will be announced soon and then be available on the festival website (ebertfest.com). All films will be screened at the Virginia Theatre, with additional events on the U. of I. campus.

BRIEFS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Complete details about the fellowships program, including how to apply, are available at www.ncsa.illinois.edu/about/org/fellowships. Applications are due by April 15. For more information or to discuss ideas for proposals, contact Jay Roloff at jayr@illinois.edu.

Newspaper, trade journal archives

Digital newspaper site announced

The History, Philosophy and Newspaper Library recently announced a free online archive of digitized historic newspapers and trade journals. The Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections, organized in four different collections, is available at http://idnc.library.illinois.edu.

Using Veridian Digital Library software, the collection offers a modern and easy way to access unique research tools and engage with the past. The new site will replace Olive Active Paper, which will be retired over the summer. The site includes interactive features that allow users to tag articles, correct text that was generated by optical character recognition and share on social media. Users of the site are invited to help correct headlines and article text. For more information, email idnc@library.illinois.edu; follow on Twitter @IDNCNews.

Community Cinema

Small-town basketball team featured

Illinois Public Media’s free Community Cinema screening for April follows the down-but-not-out Medora, Ind., high school basketball team, whose struggles parallel its town’s fight for survival.

“Medora” is an in-depth, deeply personal look at small-town life; a thrilling, underdog basketball story; and an inspiring tale of a community refusing to give up hope despite the odds against them.

Sponsored by the Illinois Public Media/Spurlock Museum Community Cinema Partnership, the screening and discussion takes place at 7 p.m. April 1, at the Spurlock Museum with free parking in lot D-22 next to the museum.

On the discussion panel are Robert Hughes Jr., a U. of I. professor of human and community development; Mary Maurer, an assistant dean for field education and a clinical professor of field education; and Carol Wilson-Smith, a clinical professor of field education, both in the U. of I. School of Social Work.

Years ago, Medora was a booming rural community with a thriving middle class. But the factories and farms have closed and the population has dwindled. Filmmakers Andrew Cohn and Davy Rothbart traveled to the tiny town and with the blessing of Medora High School administrators and the local community, they documented a year in the life of some of the players and coaches.

While the film follows this particular team in this particular place, ultimately it is a film about America, and the thousands of small towns across the country facing the same fight. “Medora” premieres on the PBS series “Independent Lens” at 9 p.m. March 31, on WILL-TV.

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This 1906 image depicts seven women, all members of the women’s basketball team at the U. of I. Collegiate athletics have played a prominent role in the university’s history and the university has produced several prominent female athletes, including Perdita Felicien (track and field athlete), Cindy Stein (basketball player and professional women’s basketball head coach) and Susanna Kallur (international track and field athlete).

This image is one of hundreds of thousands from the University Archives holdings of the University Photolaboratory Subject File. Topics covered in this subject file include student activities, laboratories, libraries, colleges and departments, research projects and many others. 

ON THE WEB
Photo series: illinois.edu/blog/view/1561
University Archives: archives.library.illinois.edu
TRUSTEES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

offer,” Romano said of the surgery coverage.

Trustee Timothy Koritz, a physician, said he was concerned that the surgery is permanent and that students would be making the decision at a young age.

“This (procedure) causes complete and irreversible sterility,” he said, suggesting psychiatric care and hormonal care already offered in the student plan would be a “better choice for an 18-year-old.”

Trustee Edward L. McMillan, who supported the measure, said he did so reluctantly because the treatments for gender dysphoria are covered under Affordable Care Act mandates but the surgery is not. He said he was “troubled” that other students were being “forced” to pay for the procedure.

“That’s just the nature of insurance,” said Trustee Pam Strobel. “It’s not appropriate in our roles of trustees to exert our moral judgments.”

“It is indeed a medical condition that needs to be addressed medically,” said Trustee James D. Montgomery.

The measure passed with Koritz and Urbana campus student trustee Michael Cunningham voting against it.

Trustees approved a health care reorganization plan that will align clinical and academic enterprises at UIC under a single umbrella to enhance patient care, teaching and research. Clinical and academic units currently operate independently.

The board endorsed the framework of the reorganization in November, and gave final approval March 6 after Easter provided implementation plans addressing details such as lines of authority, job descriptions and other organizational issues.

Avijit Ghosh, a professor of business administration and senior adviser to Easter, said under the new organizational chart, the vice president’s position would be eliminated and a vice chancellor for health affairs at UIC would take its place, overseeing the new unified organization and reporting to the UIC chancellor. Chancellors at each of the university’s three campuses report to the president, who will continue a leadership role in health affairs through regular meetings with the new vice chancellor, UIC’s chancellor and provost, and the university’s chief financial officer.

“The system has single, unified leadership but is not overly centralized,” Ghosh said. “There is still local reporting.”

Integrating teaching and research into clinical care will create opportunities for collaborations among academic units in real-world clinical settings, officials say, fostering innovation to improve patient care.

A unified enterprise with common goals and a single administrator also will make the university’s health care operations more nimble and efficient amid rapid changes in U.S. health care, officials say.

The reorganization will be fully implemented when the new vice chancellor is hired, expected by early 2015. Clinical and academic units will maintain their current lines of authority in the meantime, and ongoing efforts to transform the university’s health care enterprise will continue.

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