Mowing dry detention basins makes mosquito problems worse

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

A study of the West Nile virus risk associated with "dry" detention basins in central Illinois took an unexpected turn when land managers started mowing the basins. The mowing of detention basins, which were previously thought to be poor habitat for mosquitoes, resulted in a significant increase in mosquito populations and an increased risk of West Nile virus.

The researchers conducted their study with Mackay, Illinois Natural History Survey entomologist Ephraim Muturi and U. of I. natural resources and environmental management professor Michael Ward. After aquatic plants were mowed in the basins, they saw a large increase in the number of Culex pipiens mosquito larvae in the basins, which had relatively few before mowing. They concluded that this increase was likely due to the presence of aquatic plants in the surrounding landscape.

"Instead, we found that the presence of a bird roost near a mosquito nursery might increase West Nile virus risk to people living nearby. Instead, we found that the presence of a bird roost near a mosquito nursery might increase West Nile virus risk to people living nearby. Instead, we found that the presence of a bird roost near a mosquito nursery might increase West Nile virus risk to people living nearby. Instead, we found that the presence of a bird roost near a mosquito nursery might increase West Nile virus risk to people living nearby. Instead, we found that the presence of a bird roost near a mosquito nursery might increase West Nile virus risk to people living nearby. Instead, we found that the presence of a bird roost near a mosquito nursery might increase West Nile virus risk to people living nearby. Instead, we found that the presence of a bird roost near a mosquito nursery might increase West Nile virus risk to people living nearby.

The research was published in the August issue of the journal Appetite. The data used in the project were drawn from the STRONG Kids Study, a Midwest panel survey of parents of preschool-aged children conducted by a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the University of Illinois and the University of Michigan. When presented with a 15-item list of recommended, neutral and unsafe weight-control strategies, nearly a third of the parents with low health literacy did not select any of the practices recommended on governmental websites such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the researchers found.

"Parents with higher health literacy were more likely to check the recommended weight-control strategies, and it’s concerning that parents with lower health literacy were significantly less likely to do so," said lead investigator Janet Liechty, a professor of social work and of medicine. "About 3 percent of the parents with lower health literacy also indicated that they would consider using unsafe tactics, such as having their child take laxatives or diet pills. Parents who had higher levels of health literacy selected a great number of weight-control strategies overall, including more neutral strategies, such as counting calories or reducing consumption of carbohydrates which, while not considered unsafe, are not necessarily recommended for children, Liechty said.

The majority of parents indicated that health care professionals, such as doctors, nurses and nutritionists, were their primary sources for weight-control information. However, parents with higher health literacy were more likely to consult books and websites, while other parents were significantly more likely to consult members of the clergy, the researchers found.

The associations between health literacy and the number and types of resources and strategies chosen remained significant even when the researchers controlled for factors such as parents’ age, race and level of education, Liechty said.

"Just like the rest of us, these parents also have ideas about dieting and what they would do to help a child control their weight, and unless we take the time to understand their thinking and offer education, they may be operating on common dieting myths," Liechty said. "It health care practitioners are parents’ preferred resource, then we can find ways to help practitioners more effectively communicate with patients and clients about ways to help kids build healthy habits."

If a health care provider counsels parents that their child is overweight or obese and some behavior changes are needed, we need to do a more careful job of monitoring what the parent actually does with that recomendation," Liechty said. "If parents tend toward unhealthy or Sick HEALTH LITERACY, Past 7
Illinois will have authority over the ed- ucation program, for the medical faculty, and Carle will be responsible for clinical oversight activities undertaken at Carle and non-Carle provider sites,” Adesta said.

The U. of L. will not use state funding for the venture and will raise $135 million within eight years, while Carle will provide $50 million for the next five years for startup costs and another $50 million once the college earns provisional accreditation from the national Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

Next steps include a national search for a dean, a search committee, an evaluation of a curriculum, accreditation and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. The accreditation process could take one to two years.

In the fall, prospective students will have the opportunity to apply to the new Carle Illinois School of Medicine.

Academic additions

State budget impasse placing fiscal pressures on university

By Mike Helenthal

Assistant Editor

Each week that passes without a state budget from Springfield clouds the near- term financial picture and makes it impossible to plan for next year’s operating budget in the upcoming fiscal 2016 budget process, said Killeen. He said the salary program would be put on hold after this year and that the university has been granted authority to reduce state support for public higher education.

Once the state budget situation is re- solved and the U. of L deals with any ad- justment in our spending plan that may be required, we will revisit the subject of sala- ries for 2015-16,” he said. “We hope that this period of uncertainty will pass soon.”

The state’s budget crisis continues to impact the U. of L. creating uncer- tainty for university planners preparing for the fast-approaching academic year.

Illinois lawmakers and Gov. Bruce Rauner failed to reach an agreement on a fiscal 2016 operating budget in July. One month into the new fiscal year, they still are at an impasse over how to solve a $3 billion and counting budget deficit.

Reacting to the situation, the university has put on hold its budget for FY 2016, paid July employee salaries from existing funds, instituted a hiring freeze in central administration, and on July 28 announced the 2015-16 employee general salary program would be delayed.

“The affiliation agreement ensures that our educational commitments to our stu- dents are home. Adelsaid told committ- ee members. “We will operate on the campus and be subject to the university’s statutes, general rules and other university policies.”

Oversight will be provided through a joint leadership team led by the chancel- lor and Carle’s chief executive officer. The Urbana provost and Carle’s chief medical officer will provide regular oversight for the medical college dean, who also will hold the title of chief academic officer in the medical college.

A joint liaison committee comprising five members from each organization will oversee the partnership planning and strategic planning. There also are provisions to re- ome the budget process and strategic planning. There also are provisions to re- ove the budget process and strategic planning. There also are provisions to re- ove the budget process and strategic planning. There also are provisions to re-
Solar farm work reflects university’s climate commitment

By Mike Helenthal

A
n outside investigation has concluded that allegations of racism within the U. of I. women’s basketball program are unsubstantiated.

The investigation, conducted by the law firm of Pugh, Jones and Johnson, included a review of more than 18,000 documents, 33 interviews, the statements of eight former players, and review of game and practice video footage.

It culminates with a report that recommends steps for clarifying expectations regarding coaches’ conduct, better defining the coach-player relationship and enhancing resources for student-athletes to report concerns or complaints about their experiences at Illinois.

Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise said the report supports the investigation’s findings based on the information that was available. She said the report will inform the university’s recommendations as quickly as possible.

“We find any allegations troubling, but we’ve got through all of the challenges,” Borkowski said. “We’ve got a lot to work with to get the U. of I. and are eager to put (the solar farm components) in the ground. We can’t wait to get started.”

The company started site work this month on the U. of I.’s 20.8-acre solar farm, located at the southwest corner of Windsor Road and First Street, Champaign. The farm, expected to be completed by the end of the year, will generate about 2 percent of the campus’ annual electrical usage.

Women’s basketball: Investigation finds allegations unsupported

“The report does recommend several actions to clarify expectations for our coaching staff and to enhance the resources for our student-athletes to report concerns of any kind. We will begin implementing those immediately.”

–Phyllis M. Wise

The investigation’s findings based on documents and interviews show that the majority of room assignments show that the majority of room assignments were segregated by race during practice and at hotels during road trips were segregated by race.

The report stated that Divilbiss “treated players less than 20 minutes in the previous game remained in the game and ready to play. Records of hotel room assignments show that the majority of room assignments featured mixed-race pairings.”

Head Coach Matt Bollant and former 

Associate Head Coach Mike Divilbiss “acknowledged that the tone of their coaching at times was too negative,” the report states. “However, the evidence shows their actions did not constitute racial discrimination or harassment.”

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Head Coach Matt Bollant and former 

of sustainability, said the solar farm will be one of the largest university arrays in the nation, further enhancing the university’s reputation as an environmental leader.

“I think it’s going to be a very important part of the university’s energy mix,” Bollant said. “We expect it to be substantially complete by Thanksgiving if all goes according to plan,” he said. “That piece will prove to be valuable, as the university is in the midst of updating its five-year iCAP plan for meeting the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, signed by Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise in 2008. Institutions mak- ing the commitment have vowed to reduce their campus carbon emissions to net-zero as soon as possible.”

Under the agreement with Phoenix Solar, the university will receive Energy Certificates associated with the solar power produced. The university also will retain the certificates of solar-power projects at the Business Instructional Fa-

Solar work has begun on the U. of I.’s first solar farm, which is expected to be online and on its way to generating 2 percent of the campus’ annual electrical usage.

Located on a 20.8-acre tract near the intersection of Windsor Road and First Street in Champaign, the farm is expected to generate 5.86 megawatts of power and contribute up to 7.86 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually to the campus power system.

The solar farm project was approved by the U. of I. Board of Trustees in 2012. Phoenix Solar South Farms LLC, the project partner, will lease the university for $1 annually, construct and run the system, then sell the power it generates to the university for $2.25 million from the Campus Utilities Budget.

After 10 years, the university takes ownership of the solar farm, which could keep producing low-cost power for the campus for as many as three more decades, though at a decreasing rate because of standard solar panel degradation rates.

Phoenix Solar’s Joe Borkowski said his company has spent the last three years working to meet state rules and regulations governing the project. He said company officials are eager to start construction.

“It’s been a long process, but we’ve got through all of the challenges,” Borkowski said. “We’ve got a lot to work with to get the U. of I. and are eager to put (the solar farm components) in the ground. We can’t wait to get started.”

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Hybrid saccharaee also grows at lower temperatures

By Diana Yates

Life Sciences Editor

U.S. farmers have long hoped to extend sugar cane’s growing range northward from the Gulf Coast, substantially increasing the land available for sugar and biofuel crops. But warmer winters developed in the 1990s have proved harder in colder climes, surviving overwinter as far north as Boono- rville, Arkansas. But until now, no one had tested whether these “miscanes,” as they are called, actually photosynthesize, and thus continue to grow, when the thermomether dips.

Researchers now report that two miscanes—the offspring of crosses between sugarcane and a hardy, cold-tolerant grass, Miscanthus—perform as well as the grass species Miscanthus × giganteus at 10 degrees Celsius (50 F), staying alive and growing—with carbon dioxide to plant matter at a steady rate. Although the rate of photosynthesis is somewhat lower than that of sugarcane at 10 C, it doesn’t stall out altogether, as it does in sugarcane. The researchers said their findings in the journal Global Change Biology Bioenergy.

“There are two different aspects of cold tolerance,” said co-author Erik Sacks, who led the research with postdoctoral researcher Katarzyna Glowacka. “One is the ability to survive the winter temperatures, the other is the ability to photosynthesize in cooler tempera- tures.”

For the study, the researchers exposed sugarcane and Miscanthus × giganteus to temperatures ranging from 10 to 40 degrees Celsius (50 to 104 F) for two weeks in the laboratory to measure the rate of photosyn- thesis during the time of exposure. When raised temperatures again to 25 degrees (77 degrees F), photosyn- thesis rebounded in the miscanes similar to Miscanthus x giganteus. This means that the gains in chill-tolerance did not blunt sugarcane’s productivity—a happy finding, the researchers said.

Many years of work remain before chill-tolerant miscanes are available for production on a large scale, the researchers said. But the results could be promising enough to show that a Miscanthus × giganteus sugar or as a productive biofuels crop on the least productive land in the United States. The difference with Miscanthus × giganteus is that this grass never dies down in the winter as sugarcane does. “To do that, you have to be working with a plant that performs well under low temperatures,” said Sacks. “That’s a huge amount of land, and some of it is not very productive currently.”

Sweet research (U. of I. postdoctoral researcher Katarzyna Glowacka, left, crop sciences professor Erik Sacks, visiting scholar Shalindar Sharma and their colleagues found that chill-tolerant sugarcane, hybridized called “miscanes,” also photosynthesize at lower temperatures.

President’s leadership program delegation visits D.C.

President Timothy L. Killeen recently led a delegation of more than a dozen U. of I. officials on a two-day trip to Washington, D.C., that provided rare access to high-ranking officials to discuss issues facing public research universities, including the many things we’ll all be working on.”

To meet the ambitious and necessary fundraising goals, Moore said the founda- tion and the campuses are developing more effective modes of outreach for directly en- gaging alumni and other donors. “We need to engage donors in ways we haven’t before,” he said. “That’s one of the many things we’ll be all working on.”

To that end, the foundation is replacing Oil with Sugar and Sweet Science with an additional goal for 2016 is $202 million.

Urbana surpasses fundraising goal, prepares for next campaign

By Mike Helenthal

Assistant News Editor

James H. Moore, U. of I. Foundation president since July 1, said that fundraising efforts are moving in the right direction.

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 Sequential best system to winnow presidential candidates

By Phil Clusora
Business and Law Editor

A race for the 2016 Democratic and Republican presidential nominations enters the early stages, voters have a large pool of candidates to consider, including 17 declared candidates on the Republican side alone.

The drawn-out primary cycle, scheduled to begin in a bloc in 2016 and lasting until June, affords a great deal of influence to a small number of voters in early primary states, such as Iowa and New Hampshire. But according to a new research from a team of U. of I. economists, the sequential election format of the primaries is the best mechanism to select the party’s candidate who would prevail in a head-to-head election against any one of the other candidates.

In the paper, co-authors George Deltas and Mattias Polborn studied the trade-offs between voters coordinating candidate quality under different primary election systems.

Using data obtained from Democratic and Republican presidential primaries from 2000-12, Deltas and Polborn ran experiments using 17 declared candidates in a primary system with a simultaneous system in which all 50 states voted at the same time. 

“The findings show that the current sequential system results in the highest probability that the Condorcet winner is elected and the highest expected quality of the nominee,” according to the paper.

The current primary system raises many of the problems for voters, Polborn said.

“First, many candidates are largely unknown to a national audience, so voters still need to learn by observing the candidates’ performance on the campaign trail,” he said.

“The second, different groups of voters – socially conservative Republicans, for example – have several candidates to consider, some that are ideologically aligned with them. And they will be more successful in managing the contest on one candidate rather than splitting their votes among all of them.”

But which candidate primary voters are on a difficult issue to decide, Polborn said.

“Rushed voter coordination of a candidate who otherwise would have been a legitimate contender if he or she were seriously considered,” he said. “In the Illinois case, the voters were choosing between candidates without the benefit of knowledge about candidate quality.”

Sequential primaries have several benefits on the front-runner at the beginning of the primary season, Polborn cites Barack Obama in 2008 as one such example.

“In a simultaneous election with a large field of candidates, the candidate who would come out on top is often not the best one,” Polborn said. “By contrast, sequential elections allow voters to narrow down the field of contenders as a way of avoiding vote-splitting among several similar candidates."

Winning, especially in early states, is important because it “conveys positive information about him to voters in later states,” he said.

“To use this ‘momentum effect,’ candidates who spend a lot of time in the coming months trying to be the front-runner, but it would make it a disadvantage if the Condorcet winner had already won the nomination. This would not disfavor the contest between the two front-runners, but it would make it so a potential third candidate has a more difficult time catching up and therefore might drop out sooner.”

The paper will appear in the Review of Economic Studies.

Mattias Polborn is a U. of I. economist and Republican candidate who lost the nomination.

Simple intervention can moderate anti-vaccination beliefs

By Diana Yates
Life Sciences Editor

It might not be possible to convince parents who are skeptical about autism to vaccinate their children often focus on the perceived risks of their first vaccinations. But according to a new study, parents who are skeptical are the people who didn’t vaccinate their children. And the study found that, when given information about the importance of vaccinating one’s child and their willingness to vaccinate their children.

Parents who decline to vaccinate their children often focus on the perceived risks of their first vaccinations, said U. of I. student Zachary Horne, who conducted the new study with U. of I. psychology professor John Hummel and philosophy professor Keith Holyoak of the University of California at Los Angeles, and UCLA graduate student Derek Powell.

“Spreading the word is important, because those are precisely the people who are not vaccinating,” Horne said.

In the paper, participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups. The first looked at materials challenging the anti-vaccination view. The second, a disease risk group, focused on the risks associated with measles, mumps and rubella, and read about the importance of vaccinating one’s children. This intervention was more in-depth than those in the previous, unsuccessful study, Horne said.

A previous study attempted to moderate people’s anti-vaccination views using a variety of approaches, including challenging anti-vaccine fears and sharing science-based information about the dangers of preventable diseases. All of the approaches failed.

In the new study, the researchers tested 312 parents nationally about a variety of controversial subjects, including their attitude toward vaccines and their willingness to vaccinate their children.

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three groups. The first looked at materials challenging the anti-vaccination view. The second, a disease risk group, focused on the risks associated with measles, mumps and rubella, and read about the importance of vaccinating one’s children. This intervention was more in-depth than those in the previous, unsuccessful study, Horne said.

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Learning categorical information gives children déjà vu feeling

By Allison Vance
Public Affairs/Editorial Associate

During development, children must learn both broad facts about the world (for example, dogs have four legs) and information that is more specific (that the family dog is scared of snow). While research in developmental psychology suggests that young children should have an easier time learning specific, concrete facts, a new study reveals that they learn general facts so effortlessly that they often can’t tell that they learned anything new at all.

The study appears in the journal Developmental Psychology.

The researchers, U. of I. psychology professor Andrei Cimpian and doctoral student Shelbie L. Sutherland, said that kids assume it is such important, widely shared information that it feels to them like they’ve known it all along.

Upon learning a previously unknown, categorical fact (“opossums make their homes in foliage,” for example), the 4- to 7-year-old children in the study often felt that they already knew that fact. But when researchers gave them more specific information (“This opossum makes his home in foliage”), the children were better able to recognize that this was something they hadn’t known before.

This difference between general, category-wide facts and specific facts was present even in the youngest children in the study, 7-year-olds. According to the new findings, Cimpian said, “From a very early age, kids are capable of reasoning about the world in these broad terms.”

The new study shows that children are also capable of learning about broad, abstract ideas, and that learning at this level might in fact be more efficient for them.

Children’s perceptions

Doctoral student Shelbie L. Sutherland and psychology professor Andrei Cimpian found that young children learn broad facts about the world so readily that they don’t remember learning the information and have the illusion that they already knew it.

Based on previous findings, Cimpian and Sutherland speculated that kids might be less likely to revise information about broad categories. This could prove problematic in certain situations, such as when children are exposed to stereotypes about groups of people.

“Kids assume it is such important, widely shared information that it feels to them like they’ve known it all along.”

The researchers said much of the previous work in developmental psychology suggests that young children are better able to reason about concrete things in the moment. The new study shows that children also are capable of learning about broad, abstract ideas, and that learning at this level might in fact be more efficient for them.

“The fact that kids’ minds are especially attuned to this information is important.”

Cimpian said, “If you learn about dogs as a category, then that information also applies to this dog and the dog you see tomorrow and the dog you’ll see in a month. Broad facts about the world provide kids with general information that helps them navigate their world.”

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Awards will be presented at the Public Affairs Brand U Innovation in Marketing Award, the Branding Leadership Award and the Innovations Award, the Crisis Communications Award, the Team Marketing Excellence. The awards include the Media's 2015 ACME awards (Awards for Communications and Marketing Excellence). The awards include the Media Relations Award, the Crisis Communications Award, the Team Player Award, the Branding Leadership Award and the Innovation in Marketing Award.

Nominations forms must be submitted by Aug. 31. Awards will be presented at the Public Affairs Brand U Seminar on Sept. 24.

For category descriptions or to submit a nomination, go to https://illinois.edu/ibs/sec6974060.

University YMCA Dump and Run

How to donate to community garage sale

If you have furniture or bicycles you’d like to donate to the University YMCA’s annual Dump and Run community garage sale, volunteers will pick them up between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Aug. 8. The free service is available by appointment only in Champaign, Urbana and Savoy.

To schedule a time for pickup, sign up online at go.illinois.edu/avg108pickup or contact Emily at emily@illinois.edu or 217-333-1500.

In addition, you may drop off items for donation during the following times at the U. of I. Stock Pavilion:

- Aug. 12-14: 8:30 a.m.-noon and 4-6 p.m.
- Aug. 15: 9 a.m.-noon

Collected items will be sold at the annual Dump and Run Sale at the U. of I. Stock Pavilion. The sale will be 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Aug. 22 ($2 admission with U. of I. student identification or $4 without). On Aug. 23 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., a $3 bag sale and half-price furniture sale is featured, and from 2:30-4 p.m. all items are free.

Proceeds from the sale benefit the Y’s community programs.

Volunteers also are needed. People who volunteer more than six hours get to pre-shop the sale in August. For more information on volunteering or to sign up to volunteer, go to www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0e5ace2fa46e-august8.

For more information about the sale and to see the list of items that are acceptable to donate, visit the Y’s Dump and Run website, universityymca.org/dump_and_run.

Institute for Sustainability, Energy and Environment

Funding awarded for research projects

The Institute for Sustainability, Energy and Environment has announced its second round of seed funding, totaling more than $1.2 million, for four major interdisciplinary research projects at the U. of I.

Three projects – stormwater control to manage disease-bearing mosquitos, a new modeling system to predict plants’ and a framework to coalesce multiple sources of low-carbon energy for transportation – will each receive more than $350,000 from iSEE over the next five years.

“Are we excited to announce funding for four more projects that explore the grand challenges our planet faces now and in the future,” said Evan DeLucia, the director of iSEE. “This type of ‘actionable’ research is why our institute was created. While our new endeavors and the three we’ve already funded, iSEE now has research projects in all five of its major themes: climate solutions, energy transitions, secure and sustainable agriculture, sustainable infrastructure, information and land stewardship.”

The projects:

- “Engineering the Microbial and Stormwater Environment for Mosquito Control” by Brian Allan, a professor of soil, water and climate science and professor of computer science, technology and modeling for stormwater management in hopes of controlling mosquitos and resulting diseases. Allan has expertise in the ecology of infectious diseases. His team includes experts in evolutionary ecology, insect-microbe interactions, vector biology, spatial epidemiology, surface-water hydraulics and hydrology, and cyberinfrastructure and geographic information.

- “Plants in silico: A multiscale Modeling Platform to Predict Crop Response to Climate Change” by Stephen Long, a professor of crop sciences and of plant biology, will research how to accurately predict and model plant response to climate change – from the molecular level to the ecosystem level. Long, a renowned expert in crops, cropping systems and the impacts of global atmospheric change on plants, will lead a team that features experts in genomics and plant metabolism; high-performance computing; molecular modeling and simulations; mathematical ecology; and photosynthesis.

- “Interdependent Critical Infrastructure Systems for Synergized Utilization of Multiple Energy Sources To- ward Sustainable Transportation” by Thomas Overbye, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, will create a framework for new strategies to expand use of alternative technologies and creativity in the energy sector – using multiple renewable energy sources to fuel better regional and national transportation systems. Overbye, who has expertise in power and energy systems operation and control, will work with experts in modeling of water-food-energy systems and infrastructure; environmental and economic policy analysis; logistics systems and transportation networks; and the water-energy nexus.

- “A Nanotechnology Approach for Efficient Crude Oil Pollution Treatment via Entrapment, Dispersal and Removal using Nano-CarboScavenger” by Dipanjan Pan, a professor of bioengineering, will optimize a Nano-CarboScavenger, a particle designed to adsorb oil and remove it from water. Pan has expertise in developing carbon nanoparticles. He will work alongside experts in bioremediation, biolubricants and alternative fuels.

For more information about the institute and these projects, go to sustainability.illinois.edu.

James Emberton, 64, died July 16 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. He was a construction laborer at the U. of I. for Facilities and Services from 1988-2006. Memo- rials: National Alliance on Mental Illness, www.nami.org or the University YMCA, 102 S. May Street, Champaign. A memorial service will be at 10 a.m. July 22 at the Urbana Unitarian Universalist Church of Jerseyville, www.jcpresby- terians.org.

Anthony Frank Graziano, 78, died July 25 at his home in Wayzata, Minnesota. He was a research associate in the department of mining, metallurgy and petroleum engineering in the College of Engineering for 38 years, retiring in 1999. He also served as the assistant to the vice chancellor, acting director, assistant to the dean, associate dean and assistant to the president. Memori- als: U. of I. Foundation, 1305 W. Green St., Urbana, IL 61801, in support of climate change, Engineering. https://www.sif.illinois.edu/Gifts/StartGiving.aspx,

Anthony Frank Graziano, 78, died July 25 at his home in Wayzata, Minnesota. He was a research associate in the department of mining, metallurgy and petroleum engineering in the College of Engineering for 38 years, retiring in 1999. He also served as the assistant to the vice chancellor, acting director, assistant to the dean, associate health literacy. Continued from page 1

INEFFECTIVE METHODS: We need to make it easier for them to learn about recommend- ed strategies that are safe and effective, and provide access to user-friendly resources.”

While governmental health agencies’ websites provide an abundance of weight- control information, the study’s findings suggest that they may not be reaching the parents who need it most, either because they lack Internet access or they prefer to consult other sources that may not be as credible, Liechty said.

“How accessible is this information to parents in general, and especially to those struggling with lower health literacy?” Liechty asked.

“While the ideal approach for helping families of children with weight problems would be to refer them to comprehensive, multidisciplinary treatment programs that include medical oversight and counseling, many families don’t have access to these programs because they’re unavailable or unaffordable,” Liechty said.

Co-authors on the study were Dr. Salma M.A. Musaad, a visiting research biostatis- tician in human and community development, and Jaclyn A. Saltzman, a doctoral student in social work, both at Illinois.

June 15 at the Capital Caring Hospice Cen- ter in Alton, Virginia. She worked at the U. of I. in 1985 to head the City Plan- ning and Landscape Architecture Library and retired from the university in 1994.

Mary Ravennahl, 85, died July 12 at her Urbana home. She was an instructor at the U. of I. library from 1961-68. She returned to the U. of I. in 1985 to head the City Plan- ning and Landscape Architecture Library and retired from the university in 1994.
It has happened before. The state of Illinois was in a similar situation in 1991, 2007 and 2009, with 2007 being the closest analog for what’s happening right now. But even then, it didn’t seem that the two sides (then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan) were this far apart. In some sense, we’re moving into uncharted territory.

There is, however, precedent for high-stakes budgetary showdowns in government in other places. Certainly, the federal government shutdown of 1996 and, to a lesser extent, a few shorter ones since then provide an example. It’s also happened in a few other states – New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota. So shutdowns do happen, but usually they’re only about spending. Budgets are policy documents. Politicians can say anything they want to, but a budget requires them to put their money where their mouth is, as the old saying goes. What makes the current situation in Illinois unique is that Governor Rauner is negotiating over non-budgetary items. That makes it tough to compromise – and budget negotiations are typically the epitome of compromise.

For example, the governor wants to implement term limits. How do you compromise on term limits? It’s almost an all-or-nothing proposition. Same with redirecting reform and some of the other items on the governor’s agenda. These aren’t marginal changes. They’re very categorical compared to most budget discussions. If they haven’t already, when will the average citizen of Illinois start to feel the effects of the budgetary impasse? Is there a lack of urgency from voters a reason why the impasse has gone on as long as it has?

One thing that’s happened is that the governor has worked to minimize the sense of crisis by trying to mitigate or eliminate crisis points, like his signing of the K-12 education bill so that the schools can open in August. This is unusual in these types of budget showdowns. Whether it’s a president or a governor, they usually crank up the crisis in order to gain leverage to bring people to the table. And when there’s the inevitable hue and cry from voters, that’s when the tough decisions get made. To bring policymakers to the point where they can accept inflicting the pain of budget cuts or a tax increase, you have to make the alternative pretty bad. Hence, the need for a crisis.

But so far, we haven’t seen much of a ramp-up in pressure from the governor. Usually it’s the governor who takes the lead in doing this. But by signing the K-12 education budget, the governor took away one pressure point. Through the comptroller and the courts, the governor also has engineered a way for state workers to get paid, thus eliminating another pressure point. So he’s basically gone in the opposite direction than is usually seen by chief executives in these crises. Rather than use the crisis to help force a deal, he’s defused the sense of crisis in order to string it out. I don’t know what his ultimate strategy is, but that’s what the governor seems to be doing.

Regardless, the people of Illinois will eventually feel the pain of not having a budget. The poor are already feeling it. The day care providers are still getting payments from the state, but that’s only because the state is so behind on its bills that it is still paying FY15 money. But pretty soon that money is going to dry up, and without a budget, no FY16 money can be spent. And it won’t just be day care providers who will feel the effects. It will be all of our social service agencies as well as companies that have vending contracts with the state, among many others. They’re getting their money now, but it will start petering out once the previous year’s bills are paid.

What is the endgame for both sides? That’s the $6 billion question. The best hope is that both sides keep talking, but I don’t think anyone knows what’s going to happen.