

LASNews

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COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



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Governing 'Green'

**Speed Marvel and the
Amazing Rubber Project**

**The Problem with
Torture**

The Unbroken Chain

Latino Giants

Into Africa

**A Biochemist's Fight
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New Dean for LAS Brings Message of Optimism



On January 1, I had the honor of beginning a leadership term as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. I am its 14th dean in its nearly 100-year history, and like my predecessors, I am an ardent believer in the central contributions of the liberal arts and sciences in scholarship and in education. Having been at the University of Illinois since 1993, most recently as its vice provost, I am well acquainted with the college's reputation for attracting bright students and innovative faculty. As the largest college in the state's flagship university, LAS sets a standard that befits and advances our legacy of excellence. I am fortunate and proud to be a small part of this tradition.

While delighted with this opportunity to lead and partner with our faculty and students, the times will be challenging. The college, like other institutions and businesses across the country, must examine its entire enterprise to reduce costs without compromising its core mission of discovery and education. In some ways, our task mirrors that of the nation: to address our financial challenges in ways that secure a sustainable, vibrant future. I believe we can turn this situation into an opportunity for the college to move ahead in bold, creative ways.

Times of change require us to make choices that preserve what we most value. As the college moves forward, I hope that you—our alumni and friends—will continue to count education as among those public goods too vital to be taken for granted. Higher education, especially public higher education, for decades has provided those of ability and determination access to the kind of education that can transform their lives and ensure the strength and integrity of our country.

Many believe that a society's commitment to education is its most influential long-term investment. I hope you do, too. Together we can preserve what we value, see that it endures, and make it stronger for current and future generations.

Ruth V. Watkins

Ruth Watkins, *Dean*
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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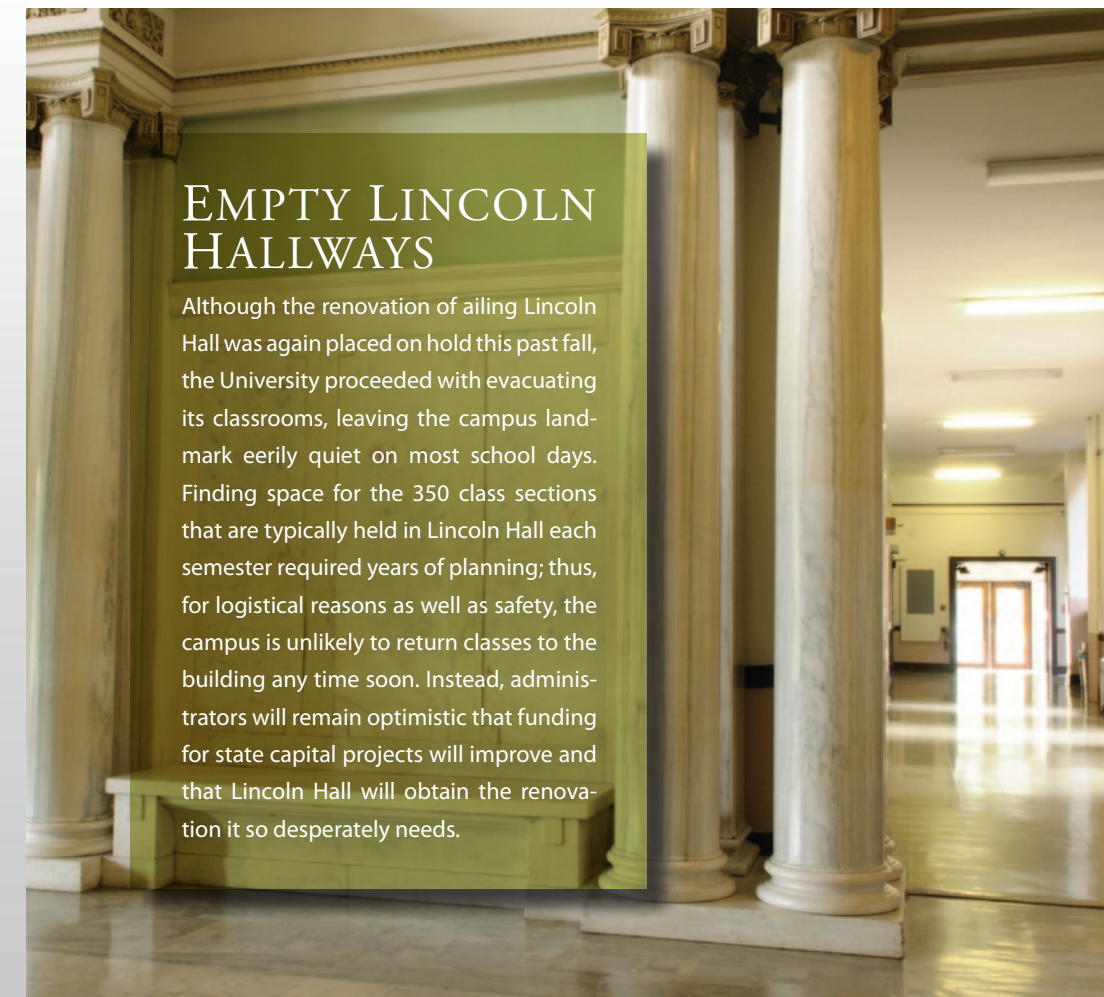
Cover: Brain scans are among the latest tools employed by economists to improve their models of human decision making.

Carbon Neutral Study Abroad

As a result of some global soul searching, the students and director of one of LAS's longest-running study abroad programs are spearheading efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of studying overseas. "Our carbon footprint has amplified in the past five years," says Bruce Murray, the resident director of the Austria-Illinois Exchange Program for 17 years, "so I felt that studying abroad should be linked with reducing our carbon footprint."

Traveling abroad come at a heavy cost to the environment, says Murray, costing anywhere from one to five tons of carbon per flight per person. To reduce that impact, he is teaming with other faculty on campus to devise something similar to a balance sheet of conservation practices that students can implement here and when they are abroad. Achieving a neutral balance may not be possible yet, says Murray, but he is confident that students can have a measurable impact and inspire similar efforts elsewhere.

International courses have exploded in popularity in recent years as students recognize the value to themselves and to future employers of cultural awareness. The College of LAS leads the campus in international instruction, offering international courses that fit into nearly any curricula and that range in duration from three weeks to a year.



EMPTY LINCOLN HALLWAYS

Although the renovation of ailing Lincoln Hall was again placed on hold this past fall, the University proceeded with evacuating its classrooms, leaving the campus landmark eerily quiet on most school days. Finding space for the 350 class sections that are typically held in Lincoln Hall each semester required years of planning; thus, for logistical reasons as well as safety, the campus is unlikely to return classes to the building any time soon. Instead, administrators will remain optimistic that funding for state capital projects will improve and that Lincoln Hall will obtain the renovation it so desperately needs.

TOP-NOTCH PROFESSORS



As a testament to the breadth of excellence in the College of LAS, professors in both the arts and sciences garnered top national honors this past fall.

Poet Brigit Pegeen Kelly, who is described as "one of the very best poets now writing in the United States," was awarded the 2008 Academy of American Poets Fellowship for a career of distinguished poetic achievement. Past recipients have included E.E. Cummings, Robert Frost, Gwendolyn Brooks, Carlos Williams, and Marianne Moore. Awarded regularly since 1946, the honor is given to one poet each year.

Chemist Martin D. Burke was named as one of the world's Top Young Innovators in the September issue of MIT's *Technology Review* for his work in simplifying the process for drug

discovery and potentially getting new, promising discoveries to patients sooner. Burke's goal is to develop a kind of "molecular prosthetic," in which researchers find molecules that perform the role of proteins that are missing or malfunctioning in diseases such as cystic fibrosis.

In addition, emeritus chemist and physicist Charles P. Slichter received a National Medal of Science from former President George W. Bush for his work on nuclear magnetic resonance. And eight faculty were named Fellows by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, among other honors.

TWO LONGTIME PROGRAMS ARE RECOGNIZED AS DEPARTMENTS

Two vibrant programs in the College of LAS enjoyed the equivalent of birthday parties this fall as they were promoted to academic departments. The new **Departments of Religion and African American Studies** are not newcomers to the college, having operated well-respected research and educational programs for more than 35 years. Still, the step up to department is important symbolically, signaling that these disciplines have "arrived."

Lessons in the Dust

Amid the ruins of Chicago's public housing history, one thing the Windy City did right may improve the future.

By Dave Evensen

More than a decade has passed since Chicago's Plan for Transformation began altering the city's landscape, with wrecking balls knocking down hulking, crime-ridden public housing projects such as Cabrini Green in favor of mixed-income housing. The legacy of such places is far from finished, however.

Built largely during the 1950s and 1960s to provide affordable housing, the projects were criticized as the products of housing discrimination even before they deteriorated. The accusation led to the Gautreaux Assisted Housing Program, one of the largest housing desegregation programs in U.S. history.

As a result of an order by the U.S. Supreme Court, between 1976 and 1998, Chicago and the U.S. government moved more than 7,100 screened and willing African American families from the projects to new city and suburban neighborhoods. The effort was called a success, but researchers—including one in LAS—are still examining the program, as similar, more recent relocation efforts have been less effective in keeping families out of poor and segregated neighborhoods.

Prior to studying Gautreaux, LAS professor Ruby Mendenhall worked as an occupational therapist treating developmentally disabled children from Chicago's notorious housing projects. Many babies she saw were weak and underweight, she says, because mothers often watered down the baby formula to make it last longer.

"Sometimes parents living in public housing wouldn't put their kids down on the floor because of the rats and roaches, so then they weren't crawling and walking, or going through the usual developmental milestones," says the assistant professor of sociology and African American studies.

She enrolled in graduate school at Northwestern University in 1998, and there she learned of Gautreaux and met some of the first people who studied the program. They included sociologist James Rosenbaum, who, in 1991, had released widely reported findings that indicated children

who moved from the city to the suburbs were more likely to attend college, to work, and to receive higher pay.

Gautreaux was called a story of "intergenerational success," and similar efforts followed. As opposed to the original Gautreaux program, however, subsequent programs such as the nationwide Moving

to Opportunity (MTO) and a second phase of Gautreaux (in 2002), had mixed results.

Families in Gautreaux's second phase, for example, were more likely to move back to their old neighborhoods, according to a Northwestern publication commemorating Gautreaux. And, while MTO improved the mental health of mothers who moved, the mothers did not experience higher employment rates nor less welfare than those who stayed behind. Rosenbaum noted, however, that MTO families moved an average of only 10 miles from their old neighborhoods, sometimes not even requiring children to change schools. The first Gautreaux families moved an average of 25 miles.

Also, in 2008, *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine cited criminologists who said that, in mid-sized cities such as Memphis, Tenn., where public housing projects had been closed down, crime soared in areas where the people were relocated.

When Mendenhall learned of Gautreaux in graduate school, she saw it as encapsulating many of her interests, and she began pursuing the topic. One of her early research projects stemmed from a desire to better understand why Gautreaux initially succeeded. Prior studies relied heavily upon statistics, but she and colleague Micere Keels (then a doctoral student) interviewed 25 of the original Gautreaux families extensively.

"There were a lot of stories about being called the n-word and just making it very clear they weren't wanted" initially in their new neighborhoods, she says, adding that the hostility was overcome often by Gautreaux families initiating friendly exchanges. Relocated families saw less crime than in their old neighborhoods, and received counseling and housing search assistance, which Mendenhall also cites for their success.

Furthermore, Mendenhall's studies have shown that black women placed in integrated or predominantly white neighborhoods that had higher levels of resources spend more time employed than do women in black, highly segregated, and poorer neighborhoods.

Phillip Bowman, director of the National Center for Institutional Diversity at the University of Michigan (and former professor at U of I), served as Mendenhall's faculty advisor at Northwestern

and calls her work on Gautreaux among the most innovative of any he's seen. She blended statistical data with interviews, he says, adding weight to her findings.

Since arriving at LAS in 2006, Mendenhall has continued studying how key historic events and policies affect individuals' development, how social networks provided Gautreaux participants with job information, and the effect neighborhood resources and segregation have upon economic status. Neighborhoods, she believes, hold solutions to—and causes of—poverty.

"People say if you [compare neighborhoods of equal income], race shouldn't matter," Mendenhall says. "But race still matters, and it's affecting opportunities." ■



Photo taken February 2008 by Piyoon Chung



Ruby Mendenhall

GOVERNING 'GREEN' Making the Marketplace More Eco-Friendly

By Laura Weisskopf Bleill

The market for "green" products is ever-expanding as more and more consumers factor environmental concerns into their purchases. Data released in March 2008 by Mintel, a Chicago market research firm, indicated that 36 percent of adults surveyed claim to "regularly" buy green products, while just 16 months earlier, only 12 percent said they "regularly" purchased green products. Also over that time period, according to Mintel, the number of people who had "never" purchased green products decreased from 20 percent to 10 percent.

Even though consumers increasingly may factor in environmental concerns when shopping for goods, that doesn't mean the marketplace has responded with products that are as green as they could be, since consumers in general are not willing to pay the total cost of making that happen. That's why government policymakers and other stakeholders continue to seek interventions that are consistent with a free marketplace and will result in safer products for the environment. But as University of Illinois economist George Deltas has found, not all policies are equally effective. Some designed with the intent to make products more eco-friendly have the opposite effect.

"We would like to find out what is the smart policy; what can deliver a lot of bang for the intervention," he says. "We do not want policies that may be thought of as being good but are actually counterproductive because one has not thought two or three or four steps down the line to see what the long-term repercussions may be."

Deltas and his coauthors, U of I agricultural economist Madhu Khanna and Donna Har-

ington of the University of Vermont, say one of the surprising results of his research showed that the establishment of minimum quality standards—for example, Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards that regulate auto fuel economy—may actually retard the progress of making products greener. A firm that must retool its product to meet a minimum standard gains an advantage over an existing



Honda is one of the few manufacturers that took out a full-page ad emphasizing mileage.

greener competitor because it can now claim to be green, yet its product may still be cheaper than the product achieving higher standards. The undesired result is that the firm that already manufactures a more eco-friendly product will have to cut prices to compete with the firm that was forced to improve its less eco-friendly product, a move that shrinks profits. Lower profits and market share may ultimately reduce the incentive for the greener firm to continue to produce a higher quality product and to keep improving it.

"You can actually do damage by implementing a minimum quality standard," says Deltas, an associate professor of economics who has been at the U of I since 1995. "What happens is that you reduce the incentives of the firms that exceeded the standard to continue to make the same quality product."

Taxation and cost-sharing subsidies, Deltas found, are interventions that may push firms who market green products in the same direction as firms that do not—to produce even more eco-friendly products.

The tax would be proportional to how much the product pollutes. Many large appliances, such as washing machines, are rated by how much energy they consume. The government could tax the product on a sliding scale—the more energy-efficient the product, the lower the penalty.



This type of policy would have the effect of making both types of firms—the large market leader which already has a green, and likely more expensive, product (Firm A), and the guy with the smaller market share and a dirtier product (Firm B)—clean up their acts, Deltas says. The incentives to improve their products are the same for both businesses—a lower tax on their product, which will be more appetizing to consumers.

"If you actually put in a sliding scale, you're hitting both firms," he says. "You're actually providing a stronger incentive for Firm B to make the product greener. You're also providing a stronger incentive for Firm A."

Cost-sharing subsidies occur when the government or another stakeholder offers to pay a portion of the research and development costs to make a product greener. Although subsidies may achieve the government's goal of more eco-friendly products, the firms may not like them, Deltas says, despite the fact that a subsidy seems at first to add to their bottom lines. This is because the firms still have to invest some of their own monies and, more significantly, if all the firms have the incentive to do the same thing, it will ultimately result in stronger competition, which may lower profits for all.

Deltas acknowledges that his research contains one major simplification—it did not factor in niche markets. There are some consumers who may be so sensitive to environmental issues that they do not consider expense in their purchases. So smaller firms may be flexible enough to market to those customers and turn a profit. Still, he hopes the results that he found can impact future policy decisions.

"Ultimately you want to make a difference," says Deltas. "I think economists can be useful in making a difference by providing reasoned arguments about what policymakers should be cognizant of when they design policies. Clearly this work is meant to eventually help shape policy." ■

SPEED MARVEL

AND THE AMAZING RUBBER PROJECT

ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS, BUT LEAST-REMEMBERED, GOVERNMENT PROJECTS OF WORLD WAR II WAS AT U OF I.

By Doug Peterson



SPEED MARVEL sounds like the hero of a summer big-screen blockbuster—a melding of Speed Racer and the Marvel comic book universe. But for the real-life Speed Marvel, the only “melding” that took place occurred in his LAS chemistry lab. And instead of spandex, the primary stretchable material that he worked with was rubber.

In fact, Carl “Speed” Marvel looked more like a superhero’s alter ego, always dressed in a dark, navy blue suit coat and black socks. He also happened to be one of the most influential and colorful researchers in the more than 100-year history of the University of Illinois Department of Chemistry.

Recognized as a father of synthetic polymer chemistry, Marvel was a key figure in one of the most ambitious, but least-remembered, government projects

of the 20th century—the Synthetic Rubber Research Program. This heroic project, which involved the government, industry, and 11 universities, aimed to create enough synthetic rubber during World War II to compensate for the natural rubber supply that had been choked off by the Japanese.

“Our natural rubber had been coming from the Malay Peninsula, but the Japanese took over the entire area,” recalls Robert Chambers, who worked for Marvel as a graduate student during the war. “Without the natural rubber, we had to have synthetic rubber. But the synthetic rubber, in most cases, was not as good.”

According to Peter Morris, author of *The American Synthetic Rubber Research Program*, the United States “was cut off from nine-tenths of the world’s rubber-producing regions” during World War II. So something drastic had to be done, because the fate of the war effort could literally turn on something as basic as rubber tires.

Enter Speed Marvel, a home-grown Illinois boy, born in 1894 on a farm three miles south of Waynesville. After graduating from Illinois Wesleyan with his master’s degree in 1915, Marvel came to U of

I where he immersed himself in an overwhelming load of work.

“When he was not studying, he worked late at night in the laboratory,” says Nelson Leonard, a U of I chemistry professor. “As a result, he slept as late as possible but still got to the breakfast table before the dining room door closed at 7:30 a.m. His student colleagues decided that was the only time he ever hurried, and they nicknamed him ‘Speed.’”

As a graduate student, Speed Marvel also earned a reputation for his knack for identifying volatile organic compounds by odor alone. As Marvel him-



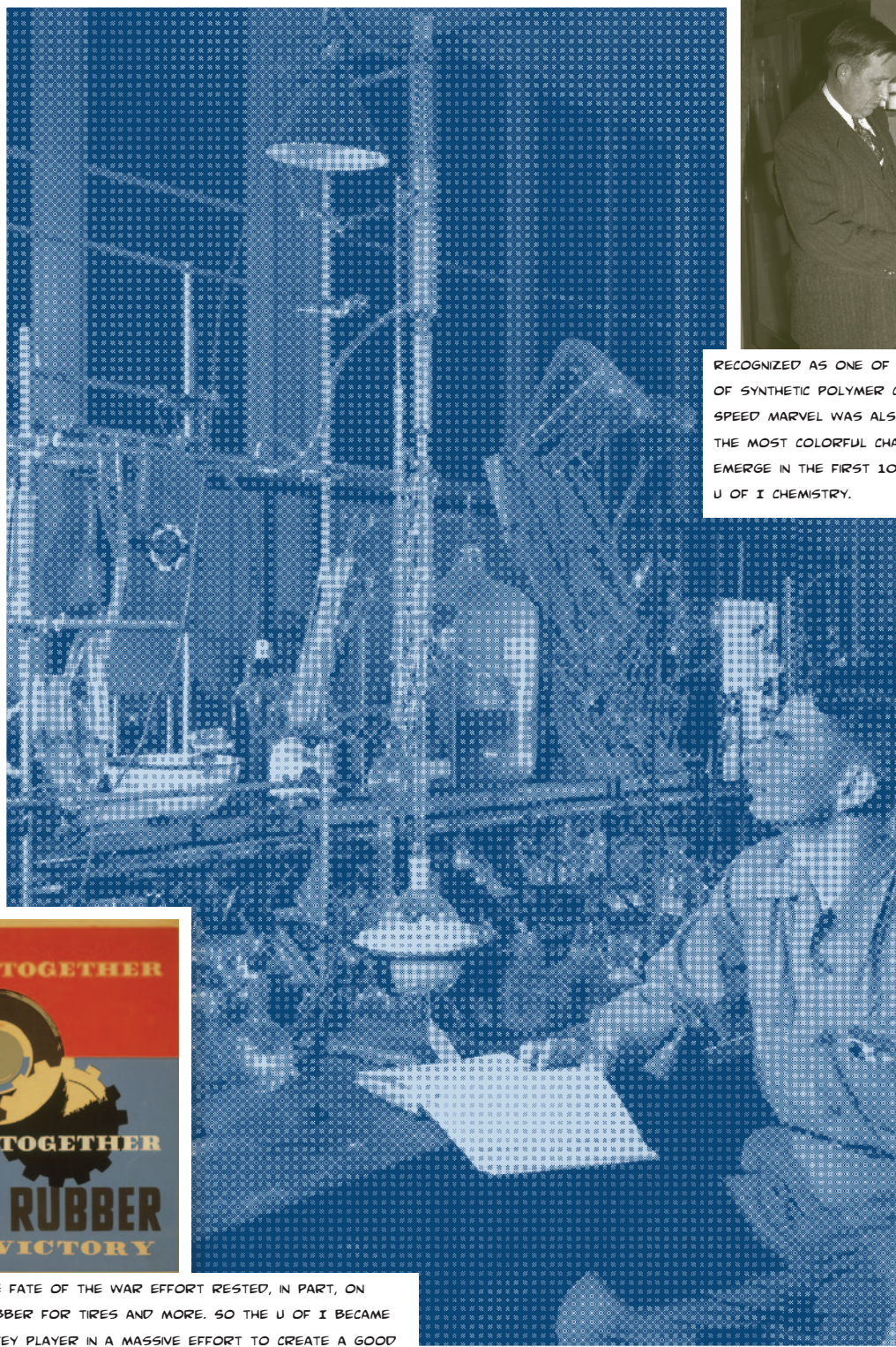
DURING WORLD WAR II, THE UNITED STATES WAS CUT OFF FROM NINE-TENTHS OF THE WORLD’S RUBBER-PRODUCING REGIONS.

self told it, a skeptical professor once handed him an unknown mixture and said he didn’t believe he could do it. So Marvel eagerly accepted the challenge and proceeded to sniff out “a low aliphatic alcohol, a volatile fatty acid, and an aromatic amine.”

In 1920, Marvel joined the U of I staff as a chemistry instructor and soon made a name for himself in polymers, which are large molecules with repeating structures. Polymers include all kinds of materials, such as plastics, neoprene, and rubber.

“Marvel was probably the leading academic researcher working on the synthesis of polymers at that time,” says Chambers. This made it natural for Marvel to step in as one of the key leaders in the Synthetic Rubber Research Program, which began in 1942 and lasted until 1957. In fact, because of Marvel’s presence, the U of I became the most heavily funded of the 11 universities in the project. Marvel’s group worked closely with industry, regularly shipping products to the rubber companies for testing, Chambers says.

Chambers was not officially involved with the rubber program, but Marvel sometimes asked him to work on the project. He recalls the long hours, working 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. six days a week and having little time for dating—although he



RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE FATHERS OF SYNTHETIC POLYMER CHEMISTRY, SPEED MARVEL WAS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST COLORFUL CHARACTERS TO EMERGE IN THE FIRST 100 YEARS OF U OF I CHEMISTRY.



THE FATE OF THE WAR EFFORT RESTED, IN PART, ON RUBBER FOR TIRES AND MORE. SO THE U OF I BECAME A KEY PLAYER IN A MASSIVE EFFORT TO CREATE A GOOD SYNTHETIC REPLACEMENT FOR NATURAL RUBBER.

admits that was probably more due to “social inadequacies.”

The universities did not produce any radical innovations in the rubber project, but they did make vital “incremental improvements,” Morris says. What’s more, the project as a whole became a tremendous success story.

“In the three-and-a-half years between December 1941 and August 1945, the United States built up a synthetic rubber industry with an annual output of 756,000 long tons,” he points out. This was seven times as much synthetic rubber as the Germans produced

during their peak year of 1943.

“The hard work of a legion of scientists and engineers made the miracle possible,” he adds, but they never did come up with a synthetic rubber that could take the place of GR-S rubber, or Government Rubber Styrene. Morris did say that Marvel’s group developed a rubber that “was superior in some respects to GR-S, but it was never commercialized.”

Marvel oversaw close to 100 researchers and tackled no less than 14 discrete topics. For instance, the U of I team solved a major snag with the original process of polymerizing GR-S rubber; they discovered that polyunsaturated fatty acids interfered with the polymerization process.

After World War II, Marvel went on a technical intelligence mission to Germany, where the team uncovered secrets that eventually led to a cold rubber process, which produced a superior rubber. Morris says that Marvel’s synthetic rubber work also led to his groundbreaking research on heat-resistant polymers in the 1950s and ’60s. The result was polybenzimidazoles (PBI), a vital material in the aerospace industry.

When three astronauts were killed in a 1967 fire aboard Apollo 1, NASA selected PBI for its superior

fire-protection qualities. PBI is now part of astronauts’ and firefighters’ clothing and is commonly used for fire-block layers on aircraft seats, among many other uses.

Marvel retired from the U of I in 1961, but he essentially had a second career at the University of Arizona, where Marvel Hall now stands in his honor.

Speed Marvel, who passed away in 1988, was larger than life in both his personality and physical stature. At one point, he carried over 250 pounds on a frame slightly over six feet tall. But according to Chambers, he could still walk around almost silently and “all of a sudden he would appear next to you.” Marvel also retained a love of nature all of his life as an avid birdwatcher and fisherman.

“Speed cruised the back roads of Illinois at 70 miles per hour, occasionally screeching to a halt, listening a minute, and then saying, ‘Over there is such and such a bird,’” recalls Elizabeth Rogers, an instructor of general chemistry from 1963 to 1988. “He then checked it off his list and roared off again.”

Stories about Marvel abound—such as the time he single-handedly put out a laboratory fire before the fire department arrived...or the time he pulled a Nebraska chemistry professor out of a lake because the friend couldn’t swim (neither could Marvel)...or the time he was consulting for a pharmaceutical company and “sampled” some medicines they were developing, hoping they would solve his long-time sinus problems. The medicines didn’t heal him, but they did turn a seven-inch-long patch of skin on his leg temporarily blue.

Marvel may not have been a superhero, no matter what images his name conjures up, but he was certainly one of the country’s best synthetic organic chemists. He was also something of an artist.

“Synthetic organic chemists are more like artists than scientists,” says Chambers. “Chemicals are like colors, and you can paint whatever picture you want by putting all of these chemicals together and synthesizing something. So Marvel was an artist. You couldn’t do any better than him.” ■

THE PROBLEM WITH TORTURE

The morality of torture—and why the debate over its use often misses the point.

By Dave Evensen

In some ways, David Sussman appears just as you might expect a professor-philosopher would: His office is filled with loose pieces of paper, he speaks in long, complex sentences filled with parenthetical asides and conditions, and during discussion he closes his eyes thoughtfully, searching for the best word or phrase.

On one point, however, he sounds something like a reluctant dungeon guard.

“It was not my desire to become the torture guy,” says Sussman, an associate professor of philosophy in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

But indeed he has, albeit in a more scholarly way than the title may imply. Sussman writes about torture, and ever since his philosophical essay “What’s Wrong With Torture?” appeared in 2005, he’s been quoted, cited, and asked to speak numerous times to lawyers, scholars, and others on the moral distinctions of the practice.

Part of the widespread response to his work comes as a product of addressing a topic that has gained the spotlight in the wake of Abu Ghraib and other instances of torture at the hands of U.S. soldiers and intelligence agents after the September 11 attacks. Yet Sussman feels that much of the debate about torture has insufficiently addressed core moral questions about it.

“That’s what the paper’s intent amounts to being,” Sussman says. “Talking about this to show

why there might be something right about the intuition of there being something really morally [distinctive] about torture, that doesn’t just make it continuous with other forms of violent, or cruel, or damaging, treatment of people.”



In Sussman’s view, torture is harder to justify than even killing, in some respects.

“A good question is, ‘Why doesn’t the logic of self-defense—which we use to justify killing people, blowing their bodies to bits, incinerating them—why is that not in principle available here?’” Sussman says. “There are two sides to this. People who don’t want to engage this [question] at all, or the people who say, ‘There’s nothing special about tor-

ture. It’s a question of tactical effectiveness.’”

To help make his point, however, that torture is morally distinct and requires special consideration, Sussman refers to George Orwell’s novel *1984*, which, albeit fictional, portrays psychological trauma echoed in accounts by real torture victims, he says.

In the horrifying, torture-filled climax, the protagonist, Winston Smith, and his lover, Julia, have been captured by O’Brien and the Thought Police. Faced with the prospect of having a cage of starving rats fitted over his head, and unsure what his tormentor wants, Smith screams the famous line, “Do it to Julia!”

“It’s all up to Smith to figure out what O’Brien wants,” says Sussman. “What would possibly satisfy him? What betrayal or perversion would be

deep enough to satisfy O’Brien? And he comes up with betraying Julia in this way. He has to play the role of his own tormentor.... [The excerpt] does seem to be borne out of the experience of lots of victims of torture.”

In other words, as Sussman points out, torture forces a victim to contribute to his or her own violation. It’s a key point that other moral philosophers often use—and credit Sussman for—in their own discussions.

Clues to the moral gravity of torture come through accounts by victims that reveal deep psychological wounds. Torture victims have described a lasting sense of a kind of “living death,” Sussman says, and refer to their tormentor as a “perverted God.”

“And so characteristically there’s a psychological dynamic within victims of trying to figure out, mollify their tormentor, who is in some ways inscrutable, cannot be challenged, cannot be bargained with, but who holds everything in his hands,” Sussman says. “Even if this is something they don’t decidedly want to do, [victims] find aspects of their feelings and emotions sort of



In some respects, torture is harder to justify than killing, says philosophy professor David Sussman.

mobilized to try to find some way of appeasing this distant figure.”

This kind of fearful, self-undermining process forces people to experience intimate aspects of themselves—their bodies, pain, and emotions—as another being. It leaves victims with a sense of shame, and worse, he says.

“Once you had that experience of something that you thought so essentially your own being available to another, you think that you can never

reconcile,” Sussman says. “That part in some way remains other, or estranged from you, afterwards. Maybe that’s what’s going on when people talk of themselves as dead while still alive.”

Sussman places torture more in the moral realm of rape and kidnapping rather than killing or maiming in combat, which at least includes the victim’s ability to resist. This also means that the moral problem with torture isn’t necessarily about pain. Sussman’s interpretation renders a broad scope of torture techniques as immoral—including waterboarding, sleep deprivation, and forms of disorientation.

There are instances where torture does fall into the same moral category as self-defense, Sussman believes. He refers to a case several years ago in Germany where a kidnapper was captured by police as he picked up ransom for a nine-year-old boy. The kidnapper revealed the boy’s whereabouts only after he was threatened with torture (unfortunately the boy had already died).

Justified torture, however, is hard to attain under Sussman’s view. For example, self-defense wouldn’t justify torturing someone who knows about an evil act but is not involved. And while torture might be justified in so-called ticking bomb scenarios such as those found in the television drama *24*, where Jack Bauer tortures terrorists who possess knowledge of imminent attacks, Sussman notes that the characters are operating under knowledge and confidence that are almost always unrealistic.

Sussman has done further writing about torture, including defining the limits of torture. But these are heavy topics to ponder, and he sighs heavily at the prospect of adding to the volume of thought about torture in the future.

“I want to write about something else for a while,” he says. ■

SECURITY’S PRICE TAG

LAS historians say crisis often leads to clamping down on personal freedoms—or bending the rules.

The use of torture tactics by the United States against terrorism suspects after the September 11 attacks follows a theme found throughout the 20th century in times of crisis, according to LAS historians.

When faced with a perceived threat, authorities tend to curtail civil liberties in the name of added security, says Mark Leff, associate professor of history in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, who teaches a class called “Crises of Political Tolerance.” There was the “red scare” after World War I, the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, the anti-communist investigations during McCarthyism, and others.

“There’s a pattern to over-react during these periods,” Leff says. “And then we say, ‘Oh, how could we have done these terrible things in the past? Then we find ourselves doing a lot of fairly similar things again. We have this rather dangerous way of seeing things as a justified tradeoff.’”

The pattern extends beyond prominent historical examples. LAS graduate student in history Julilly Kohler-Hausmann contributed to an essay compilation by detailing the actions of Jon Burge, a Chicago policeman from 1970 to the early 1990s, who for years beat and tortured suspects in his station on the city’s south side.

Kohler-Hausmann writes that Burge’s actions were part of an effort to maintain control over largely African American neighborhoods.

“While the police hid their practices from the press and mainstream society, they encouraged their victims to share their experience within their neighborhoods,”

Kohler-Hausmann writes. “These acts were not directed against specific criminals but were intended to transmit a message to entire communities about state authority—private torture was therefore explicitly public; the bodies of beaten suspects functioned as warnings of the violence these Chicago police would use in their struggles to control neighborhoods.”

Historically, Leff adds, the “ticking bomb” scenarios where torture is necessary to get a terrorist to talk about an active, ongoing plot are extremely rare, and only cloud the debate, he believes.

“Actually the kind of tradeoffs you make [when you impinge civil liberties] are often not between security and liberty,” Leff says. “They maybe should be between security and money, for example. How much are we going to devote to protecting our ports? We don’t hear much of those kinds of tradeoffs. There are lots of things that can be traded off for security.”



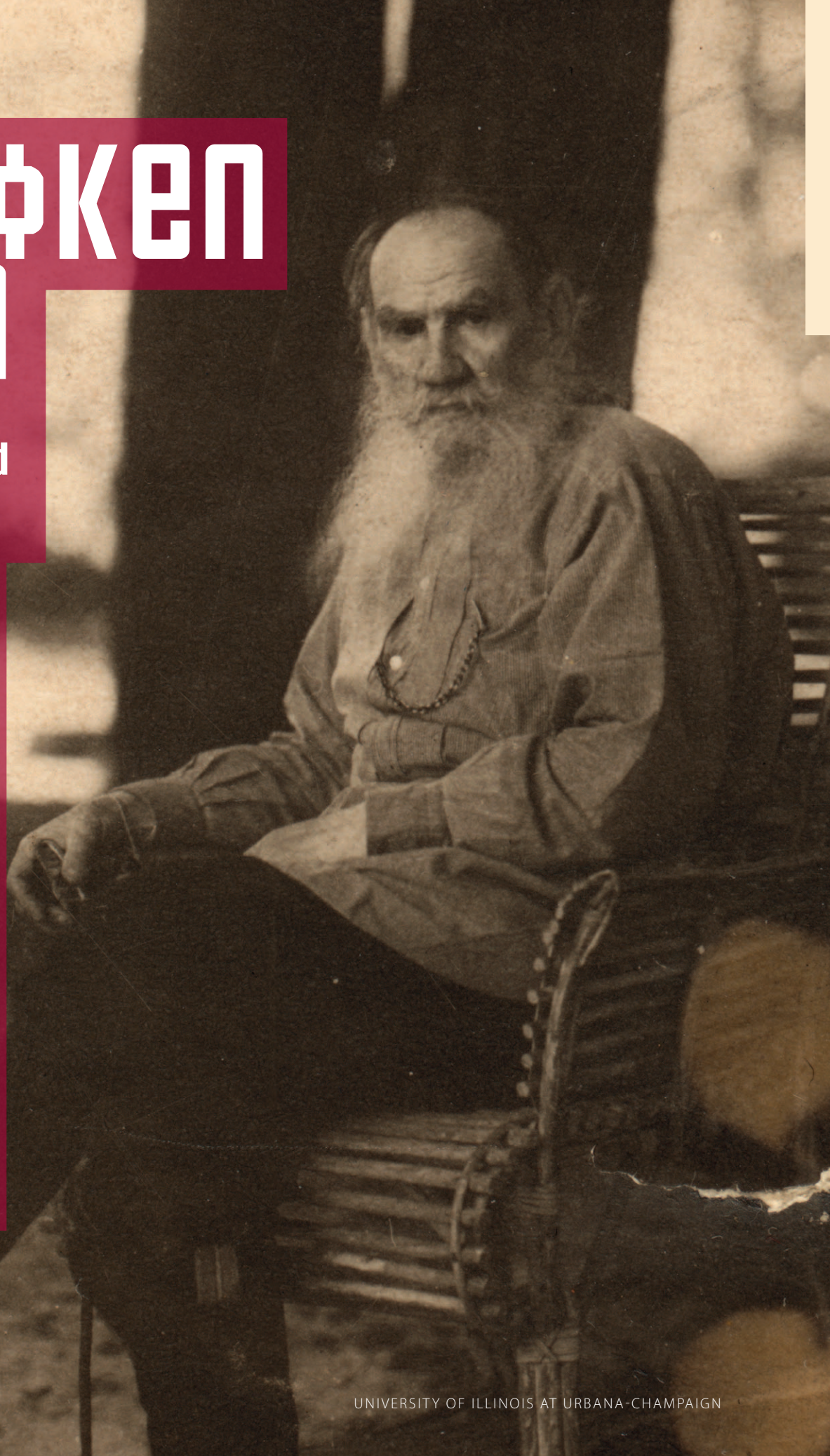
THE UNBROKEN CHAIN

Tolstoy's legacy of nonviolence influenced many great leaders.

By Paul Wood

During 27 years in a South Africa prison, Nelson Mandela found solace in books. His favorite was Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, he singled out Martin Luther King Jr. for praise and mentioned Mohandas Gandhi's work for civil rights in South Africa. Gandhi himself pointed to Tolstoy's influence, especially letters Tolstoy wrote him.

Americans know Tolstoy as a novelist who wrote by the pound. But University of Illinois scholars know him as a spiritual pioneer whose thoughts on nonviolence are part of an unbroken chain.



Jonathan Ebel, a religious studies professor in the College of Liberal Art and Sciences, says, "King knew of and quoted Tolstoy and was strongly influenced by many who were directly influenced by Tolstoy, most importantly Gandhi." At the Urbana campus last year, thousands read and celebrated one of Tolstoy's shortest works, *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, as part of a nationwide campaign, the Big Read.

Harriet Murav, who heads the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, calls the book about an ordinary man's dying epiphanies a good example of Tolstoy's later, mature spiritualism. "What is generally referred to as his spiritual crisis took place before the writing of *The Death of Ivan Ilych*," she says. "Tolstoy describes his search for God in his work titled *A Confession*. I would not say that [*The Death of Ivan Ilych*] is a milestone on his path to spiritualism, because no word that ends in 'ism' can adequately characterize Tolstoy, who rejected all established doctrines and creeds."

It's easier to see the process of Tolstoy's spiritual growth in his earlier books *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, she says.

In *Anna Karenina*, Levin is Tolstoy's stand-in. Levin says God guided him:

"I looked for an answer to my question. But reason could not give me an answer. Life itself had given me the answer, in my knowledge of what is good and bad. And that knowledge I did not acquire in any way; it was given to me as to everybody, given because I could not take it from anywhere."

Murav says that even as a young man, the author chaffed at authority. He tried to treat his serfs as equals, and early in life risked his life by challenging the tsar in writing.

Tolstoy, a great landowner, railed against wealth, Murav says. In his short story "How Much Land Does a Man Need?" Tolstoy's answer is "six feet," enough to be buried in. Still, he maintained his beloved estate Yasnaya Polyana—4,000 acres at its peak—until the end.

Tolstoy was a man of contradictions and he was his own favorite subject, the professor notes. He kept copious diaries and tended to write autobiographical novels.

"You and I might have a doubt," Murav says. "If he had a doubt, it was a major event. He had the leisure to study, the leisure to think, and a massive ego—'If I have a problem, it must be a major problem.'"

The path to enlightenment was not as direct as it might seem in hindsight, says religious studies Professor Bruce Rosenstock.

"Tolstoy had a great struggle with his own Christian faith and grew to faith from a skeptical start, as did many philosophers and thinkers and writers in that century," Rosenstock says. "He returned fully to his Christian faith by discovering in Jesus a complete love for one's fellow human being. That meant for him never committing an act of violence against a fellow human."

In his book *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, Tolstoy acknowledged his forerunners, including the Quakers. But Jesus was always the prime source.

"If he had a doubt, it was a major event. He had the leisure to study, the leisure to think, and a massive ego—'If I have a problem, it must be a major problem.'"

Shortly before his death, Tolstoy would write a 413-page "Letter to a Hindu" as well as personal letters to Mohandas Gandhi that the Indian philosopher termed essential.

Gandhi initiated the exchange, writing to Tolstoy about his activism in South Africa: "If we hold out to the end, as I think we would, I entertain not the slightest doubt as to the ultimate success; and your encouragement in the way suggested by you can only strengthen us in our resolve."

Rosenstock says Gandhi used Tolstoy's ideas but adapted them.

"Gandhi employed nonviolent civil disobedience, or satyagraha, as a strategy to challenge political authority. Tolstoy had

thought you needed to simply withdraw completely from society. But conditions were quite different for Gandhi, who was trying to free his native land from a foreign occupier," he says. "I don't think Tolstoy imagined a nonviolent rebellion."

In South Africa, Gandhi led a movement of Indian miners to resist inequalities by striking and then accepting the resultant floggings and imprisonment. From there Gandhi moved to his greatest work, India's independence from British rule.

The followers of Tolstoy did not always follow him to the precipice, Rosenstock notes. And Tolstoy and Gandhi diverged on resistance. Rosenstock makes this distinction: Tolstoy did not believe there was any legitimate use of force. Tolstoy advocated nonresistance to evil, while Gandhi favored accepting violence against one's self to enact change.

"There was a powerful orthodox church in Russia whose head was the tsar, making a very powerful state-church combination," Rosenstock says. "Tolstoy was in favor of sort of dissolving the state-church. One way, he thought, would be to make every Christian a pacifist, unwilling to serve in the tsar's army and thus unwilling to serve the state-church. In this, he concurred with the anarchists of his time. He wasn't against the Russian state; he was not in favor of any sort of state. Tolstoy was so skeptical of any society that he thought it was worthless to change one for another."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in a TV interview, once described how he owed a debt to Tolstoy, but also differed in some ways with the Russian author's radical purity:

"Now, some pacifists are anarchists, following Tolstoy. But I don't go that far. I believe in the intelligent use of police force. I think one who believes in nonviolence must recognize the dimensions of evil within human nature, and there is the danger that one can indulge in a sort of superficial optimism, thinking man is all good."

King also made this distinction between his beliefs and Gandhi's: "I think it is just as bad to passively accept evil as it is to inflict it."

Murav says even Tolstoy had trouble living the spiritual life he prescribed. He spent the last decades of his life trying to live like a Russian serf, says Murav. "At the end, Tolstoy ran away from his own life," she adds. The great writer abandoned his estate and wife for a pilgrimage, only to die alone in a train station. ■



MONEY ON THE BRAIN

THERE'S A LOGICAL REASON WHY WE SOMETIMES MAKE IRRATIONAL DECISIONS—IT'S HOW WE ARE WIRED.

By Holly Korab

Consider this moral dilemma. Warfare has disrupted food shipments to a children's home in southern Uganda. Sixty orphans live there, and you must decide how to reallocate their meager rations. You have been given two choices: Either you can take six meals away from each of two children or 10 meals away from one. The first choice is less efficient because it results in fewer overall meals for the children (12 meals lost versus 10), but the latter choice is more equitable. What do you do?

While you deliberate, an MRI machine is recording your brain activity. The orphanage is real—Canaan Children's Home in Buziika, Uganda—and so are the consequences of your choice: the amount of donation the orphanage receives will be affected by your decision. To make your decision all the more agonizing, the children gaze at you from a computer screen as you maneuver a lever between the two options.

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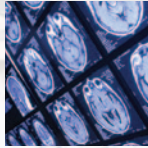
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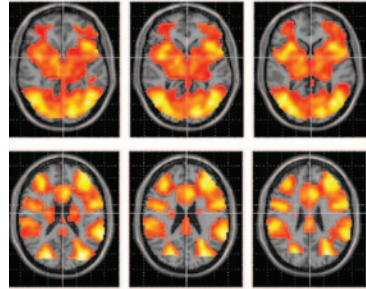
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THE ASSUMPTION BY ECONOMISTS THAT HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS RATIONAL IS COMING UNDER HIGH-TECH SCRUTINY THROUGH THE USE OF FUNCTIONAL MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING AND OTHER TECHNIQUES IMPORTED FROM NEUROSCIENCE.



THE NEW FIELD OF NEUROECONOMICS REVEALS THE BIOLOGICAL REASONS WHY PEOPLE MAKE DECISIONS THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE IN THEIR BEST INTERESTS.



Based on MRI scans, economists now know that different regions of the brain are activated depending upon the type of decision a person is asked to make. Researchers are now trying to quantify activation levels as one of the first steps in linking brain activity with decision making.

one of the subjects thought about efficiency in making their choice, but the insula cortex, where emotion is centered, blared yellow whenever a participant contemplated taking food away.

Even though activity varied considerably among the subjects, the insula dominated, “and people overwhelmingly chose equity,” says Hsu. “And what this tells us is that contrary to what standard economic theory predicts, people value fairness. It is a basic human response.”

GET REAL

Since the early 1900s, economists have assumed that people are governed by reason; that is, they make decisions logically, strategically, and out of total self-interest. This assumption has come under challenge in recent years as behavioral studies have shown, among other things, that people value equity, they overreact to a fear of loss, and they undervalue the future, which is why they don’t save for retirement and they delay starting an exercise routine even as they grab another jelly donut. Behavioral studies account for altruism, which we saw in spades after 9/11. They also demonstrate that the context in which decisions are made are as important as the information itself.

What it comes down to is that we are more like Captain Kirk than Mr. Spock.

Researchers like Hsu are at the vanguard of a new approach to economics called neuroeconomics—a union of economics, psychology, and neurosci-

ence—“People became very emotional, telling me it was the hardest experiment they had ever done,” says University of Illinois economist Ming Hsu of the 26 people, ages 28 to 55, who subjected themselves to just such a moral quandary as part of an effort to map how economic decisions occur in the brain. He points to MRI scans in which two regions of the brain glow intermittently like warning lights. The putamen, a reward center, was lit whenever

one of the subjects thought about efficiency in making their choice, but the insula cortex, where emotion is centered, blared yellow whenever a participant contemplated taking food away.

ence—that has the potential to transform the field of economics in much the same way as brain studies revolutionized psychology a decade ago. By identifying the neural mechanisms operating when people make decisions, Hsu believes economists can understand processes that have been grasped superficially in the past.

“It’s like driving a car without being able to look under the hood. Economists have made these assumptions of rationality because they did not know how to quantify what was going on in that black box we call the brain. Now,” says Hsu, “we’re opening that black box and discovering that we can quantify human behavior, even behavior that seems illogical.”

The situation is similar to how economists had once studied the behavior of firms without looking at the strategic interactions between management and workers.

“The goal isn’t to throw out rational behavior,” adds Steve Williams, the former head of U of I’s Department of Economics and the person most influential in bringing Hsu to Illinois. “Instead, the end result of neuroeco-

INSIDE THE BLACK BOX

nomics will be a more nuanced model of human behavior and knowledge of when these nuances matter.”

Neuroeconomics is more a measurement tool than an approach to economics. MRI scans are among its most flamboyant tools, but it also uses data collected by an alphabet soup of techniques, such as PET, TMS, MEG, pharmacological and hormone changes, and genetic testing.

U of I is an ideal location for these studies because of its exceptional resources for brain imaging and the Department of Psychology’s progressive role in applying brain studies to mental illness and aging. Decision making is a natural progression of that work, and is one reason that the Beckman Institute as well as the Department of Psychology and the Neuroscience Program were so supportive

of bringing Hsu to U of I. Hsu drifted into neuroeconomics while an undergraduate at University of Arizona. He immigrated to Arizona from Shanghai, China, with his grandparents in 1990, when he was 11, to join his parents, who had arrived 10 years earlier. His parents had not wanted him to leave China before he had absorbed its language and the culture. When he was ready to attend

college, he chose the local state school, where he built an eclectic resume in political science, economics, and neuroscience, which made him an ideal candidate for a cross-cutting field like neuroeconomics. Hsu also had the good fortune of stumbling upon the lab of Vernon Smith, a Nobel prize-winning pioneer of experimental economics, who took him on as a research assistant and introduced him to the revolutionary work being done by Colin Camerer at the California Institute of Technology.

“I tried to discourage him from pursuing this for his PhD,” says Camerer of Hsu, who ignored Camerer’s warnings about the unproven nature of the field. Hsu only saw a chance to work with the best. Camerer is one of the founders of the field of neuroeconomics and is known both for his prodigious talents and his rebellious nature. He made his name by helping bring credibility to the former fringe field of behavioral economics. He is now doing the same for neuroeconomics.

One of his team’s earliest successes for neuroeconomics was with a scenario called the ultimatum game. Say that Mary has been given \$10 that she must divide with Bill. Bill may accept or reject her offer, but if he rejects it, neither of them receives a penny. Standard economic theory predicts that Bill will accept any offer from Mary rather than gain nothing. Yet, that is not what happens. When Mary decides to keep \$8 and give him only \$2, Bill gets angry and rejects the offer as unfair.

When Bill receives the unfair offer, a debate erupts in his brain, with three areas battling for supremacy. The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain associated with planning, wants the money; the insula, where emotions reside, is registering disgust; and the anterior cingulate, an area of executive function, tries to resolve the conflict. Whether Bill accepts or rejects the offer depends on the strength of the insula.

This kind of intercranial negotiation occurs with all decisions, says Hsu, and what their neural research will ultimately do is identify the patterns. Admittedly, most of their studies are limited to artificial tasks, such as whether a person wins or loses \$10. “Hardly a situation that will alter your life outcome but that is where we start,” says Hsu. “Even fairly simplistic tests can still help identify reactions from which we can extrapolate. How do people react to once-in-a-lifetime risks? How do they react to financial panics?”

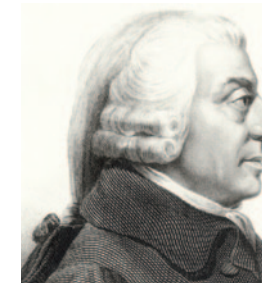
The areas most likely to reap the most immediate benefits from neuroeconomics lie at the extremes of human behavior, such as when brain function is impaired through disease, poverty, and aging. For instance, if researchers document the kinds of deteriorations that occur with age, they can

also develop a battery of tests that detect whether an individual is becoming more or less risk averse or susceptible to scams, then others could intervene accordingly. It is not far-fetched, says Hsu, to imagine that policymakers may one day use knowledge gained through studies like his to propose paternalistic measures that take into account severe cognitive declines. Individuals with severe dementia may not be able to will all their money to a dog.

At Illinois, Hsu is reaching out to both traditionalists in economics and to researchers in diverse fields, especially psychology, where he formed fruitful collaborations, such as with psychologist Jesse Spencer-Smith. They are studying how facial expressions affect decisions. For example, says Spencer-Smith, “during salary negotiations, will someone swallow the bitter pill of not being offered as much money if they can express their displeasure or if their boss smiles sheepishly while making the offer?”

The real impact of research like Hsu’s, according to Steve Williams, is what it will reveal about human nature. Hsu recently identified the neural region associated with ambiguity—decision making when the odds are unknown. Economists know that people don’t like ambiguity, and what struck Williams as he listened to Hsu describe his work was how difficult that behavior would be to circumvent. “Our aversion to ambiguity isn’t something we can easily overcome through training or education, which is the solution economics typically offer,” says Williams. “It’s biological. We’ve evolved to be hardwired against it. Ming’s work suggests that ambiguity aversion is an essential component of good decision making, whether on Wall Street or in the wild.”

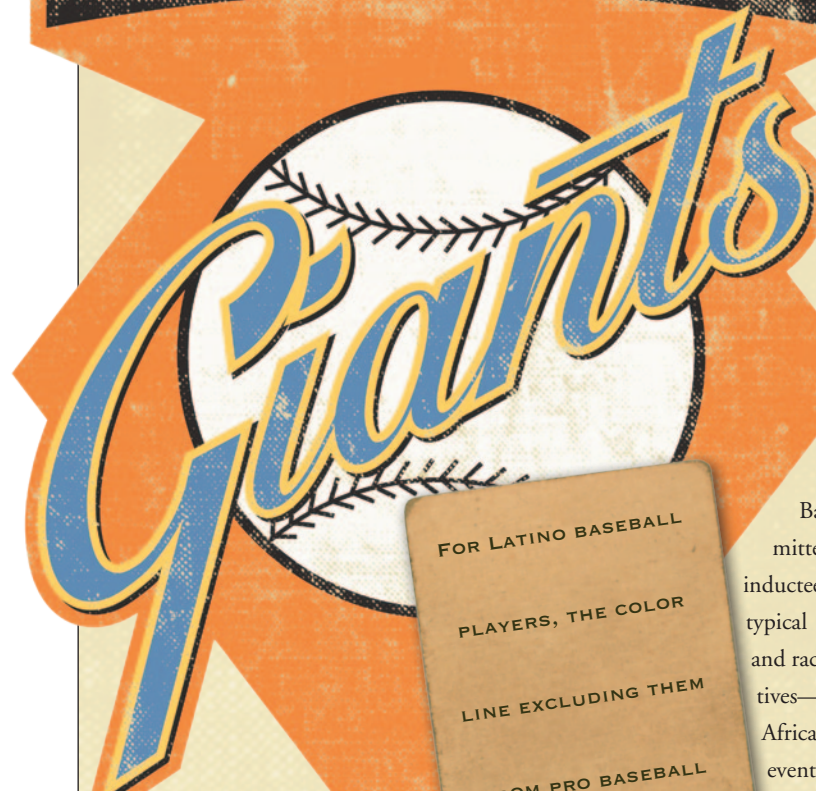
After Hsu’s paper about the orphanage was published, he received a call from the manager of a food bank who said the results resonated with him. The food bank is chronically short of food, the caller said, because people insist on equal portions, which results in waste. That’s not rational behavior, summarized Hsu, but apparently it is human. ■



Early economists, like the grandfather of classical economics, Adam Smith, recognized the role of emotions in human behavior. These concerns got pushed aside in favor of rationality in the early 1990s as economics struggled to be recognized as a natural science. Now economists are working hip-to-hip with neuroscientists and psychologists, and it is less a departure than a return to its roots. It puts human nature back into the economic equation.

OPT-OUT INITIATIVE

A few corporations have acknowledged behavioral tendencies and made them work in their employees’ best interests by offering retirement plans that were opt-out instead of opt-in. This simple change resulted in remarkably higher rates of savings. In related studies, researchers discovered that higher default rates for retirement plans generated more saving than lower default rates because people seldom changed them. Neuroeconomics looks at the biology behind such behavior.



BY
DOUG PETERSON

FOR LATINO BASEBALL
PLAYERS, THE COLOR
LINE EXCLUDING THEM
FROM PRO BASEBALL
IN THE 20TH CENTURY
WAS FUZZY AT BEST.

not have been allowed on the playing field; nevertheless, he still received his share of abuse for being “too black.”

The story of Latinos in professional baseball is often a forgotten tale, says Burgos, who has served on the Baseball Hall of Fame committee selecting Negro League inductees. He points out that the typical storyline about baseball and race has focused on two narratives—the complete exclusion of African American players and the eventual integration, or redemption, of baseball beginning with Robinson.

“I think one of the reasons why the story of Latinos in baseball has been ignored,” Burgos says, “is because it complicates

those two narratives. What we have is the *partial* inclusion of Latinos.”

In other words, the story about race in baseball is not just about black and white. It is also about brown.

More than 50 Latino players from various countries in Latin America broke into the major leagues between 1902 and 1947, says Burgos, who chronicles this history in his book *Playing America’s Game*. But for Latino players, the color line in major league baseball was fuzzy, and the decisions about whether to admit them could be as exasperating and subjective as an umpire’s call of strikes and balls. Dealing with the color line became a game in itself.

In September of 1944, three years before Jackie Robinson cracked professional baseball’s infamous color line, Robert Ortiz of the Washington Senators decided to do something about the racial taunting that was coming his way from the opposing team’s dugout.

The St. Louis Browns’ players had been harassing Ortiz and other Latino players on the Senators, saying they were African, not Latin, and hurling a nonstop barrage of insults. Finally, Ortiz stormed over, planted himself in front of the Browns’ dugout, and challenged the player leading the verbal attack.

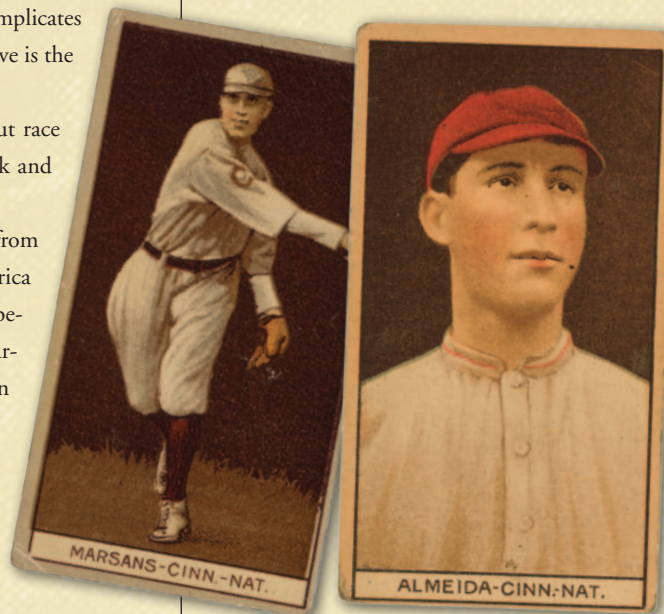
The result was an all-out brawl between both teams.

This incident illustrates the ambiguous position in which Latino players found themselves through most of baseball’s history, says Adrian Burgos Jr., an LAS professor of history. Officially, Ortiz was not considered black or else he would

The shade of a person’s skin was a dominant factor in deciding which Latinos could cross the color line, so most of the major league Latinos in the first half of the century were light skinned. But ethnic background also played a big role. Nowhere was this more obvious than with the case of the Cincinnati Reds, who signed two Cuban players—Rafael Almeida and Armando Marsans—in 1911.

The Reds’ management argued that Almeida and Marsans were pure Spaniards, for they were well aware that American society placed the Spanish on a higher plane than other Latinos. When Marsans and Almeida joined the team, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* called them “the purest bars of Castilian soap that ever floated to these shores.” The phrase, “purest bars of Castilian soap,” conjured up two images of whiteness—soap and the Castilian region of Spain.

“To be of a Castilian ethnic background is to connote a higher breed, more European, more white,” Burgos explains. “Therefore, to say they are the purest bars of Castilian soap is to say these guys are white. They’re all right.”



Armando Marsans and Rafael Almeida of the Cincinnati Reds: These Latino players were called ‘the purest bars of Castilian soap’ by the *Cincinnati Enquirer*.



Ironically, he notes, what the Cincinnati writer didn’t realize is that Castilian soap is actually black.

According to Burgos, the very first U.S. Latino to break into major league baseball was Vincent Nava, who played in the National League in 1882. The color line barring African American players was not fully established until after Nava, in 1889; but in the early part of the new century, organizations began experimenting with the inclusion of players who were not fully white, nor fully black.

“It is true that the doors of organized baseball are open to Indians, Cubans, Puerto Ricans [sic], Hawaiians, etc., but only if their skin, hair, and features will pass muster as evidence of membership in the white race,” said one *New York Age* columnist in 1939.

In the 1930s and ’40s, the economics of baseball opened the door to more Latinos, Burgos explains, because Latin America was a good source

of cheap talent. And although many Latino players were harassed for being “too black” during those years, the first actual *black Latino* player in pro baseball, Minnie Miñoso, did not arrive until two years after Jackie Robinson.

The Cleveland Indians signed Miñoso in 1949, but after a brief appearance in the majors, he remained mired in the minor leagues for two years because of a color barrier of a different sort.

If Miñoso had started for the Indians, he would have been the fifth black player in the lineup; in other words, more than half of the nine starters would be black, and that would not be allowed.

Miñoso was eventually traded to the Chicago White Sox, and in 1951 he became Chicago’s first black player—although some people today consider the Cubs’ Ernie Banks the first black player in Chicago. Because of Miñoso’s Latin heritage, they do not believe he qualifies as a black player.

The irony is that in the early part of his career, Miñoso was considered too dark-skinned to play; and in the 21st century, he’s not considered black enough by some to be recognized as the first black player in Chicago.

“The credit that Miñoso deserves as an integration pioneer gets minimized and diluted, not in the ’50s or ’60s or ’70s, but in the 2000s,” says Burgos. “But Miñoso was not just the first black Latino to break into the league. He was also the first to star.”

Highlighting the role of these Latin pioneers—giants in the game of baseball—does not diminish the role that Jackie Robinson played in finally breaking down the color barrier in baseball, he also stresses. What Robinson did was unique.

“Robinson took on the weight of dismantling the racial barrier,” Burgos says. “Everyone focused on him.”

Burgos says that to decisively break down the barrier, it took an unambiguously African American player. “We needed a Jackie Robinson to destroy any semblance of ambiguity.”

Nevertheless, whether they were perceived as black, Latino players had an aura of “foreignness” that still made them a target. As Burgos points out, “In the era of Minnie Miñoso, pitchers did not say, ‘Hey Minnie, are you Cuban or black?’ Either way, they tried to bean him.” ■



Adrian Burgos Jr. (right), U of I history professor, is a nationally recognized authority on Latino baseball. He has also served on the Baseball Hall of Fame committee selecting Negro League inductees. Here, Burgos attends a meeting for the Negro League Baseball Museum in Kansas City.

How Ulcer Bacteria Can Exist in the Stomach

Scientists have long wondered how a bacterium responsible for many cases of ulcers can survive in such an inhospitable environment as the human stomach—a place with a pH somewhere between that of lemon juice and battery acid.

Now a team led by U of I microbiologist Steven Blanke has shed light on how *Helicobacter pylori* alters human cells to create a more suitable niche in the stomach for colonization.

Their studies show that *H. pylori* releases the toxin VacA, which hijacks receptors on the surface of cell membranes lining the stomach and journeys with the surface receptors into the interior of cells. Once inside, the toxin changes the cells in such a way that promotes the survival of *H. pylori* bacteria.

By identifying the receptors that the toxins use to get into the cell, Blanke says drug makers can target the receptors for the development of new drugs to block the actions of toxins upon cells.

H. pylori is behind most human cases of gastric and duodenal ulcers, and long-term infection is a significant risk factor for stomach cancer, the second leading cause of cancer death worldwide.

Development of new drugs to block the actions of toxins upon cells.



Fighting Dandruff and Monitoring Oceans

It turns out that selenium, an ingredient in dandruff shampoo, contains more potential than just clearing up scalp problems—it also may help unlock secrets of the oceans and serve as a key indicator about the future of life.

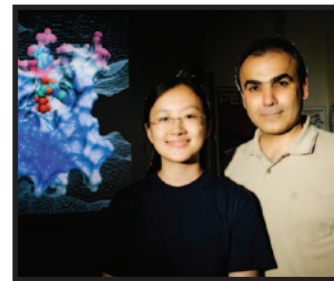
Tom Johnson, associate professor of geology at U of I, and other scientists at the University of Leicester in England are using selenium to investigate how the oxygen content of oceans has changed. Determining the oxygen content of oceans has historically been very difficult, and these researchers are the first to do so by measuring the isotopic ratios in sediment of selenium, which is a nutrient and antioxidant.

Biochemists Discover Treatment for Lethal Staph Infections

They have been called “the cockroaches of bacteria” by the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Certain strains of the *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria, better known as “staph,” can be as resilient and as elusive as the common cockroach. They have also been linked with more than 18,000 deaths a year—slightly higher than U.S. deaths from AIDS.

To battle these microscopic bugs, biochemists in the College of LAS have genetically engineered proteins that can neutralize several toxins emitted by staph bacteria. One protein created by the team led by David M. Kranz can neutralize *Staphylococcus enterotoxin B*, one of the primary toxins emitted by staph bacteria. Their other engineered proteins show promise of neutralizing the deadly *Staphylococcus enterotoxin C* and toxic shock syndrome toxin 1.

All three of these staph toxins act in much the same way. They bind tightly to white blood cells and trigger a massive immune response in which large amounts of cytokines are released into the body. High levels of cytokines damage organs, sometimes fatally. The engineered proteins developed by Kranz’s team bind tightly to the staph toxins so that the entire complex can be safely cleared from the body, such as through the kidneys.



Biochemistry professor Emad Tajkhorshid, right, and biophysics graduate student Yi Wang have identified a key site in the cellular recycling of ATP that allows your body to produce enough of it to survive. ATP is the primary energy source for most cellular functions.

Honey Bees High on Cocaine Shed Light on the Mysteries of Addiction

Never trust a bee that is hopped up on cocaine. Researchers have found that when foraging bees get a buzz from cocaine, they often exaggerate the quality of nectar and pollen.

Normally, foraging honey bees alert their comrades only when they’ve found high-quality food and when the hive is in need, says Gene Robinson, an LAS entomologist and Swanlund chair who led the international research team. But when bees fly high on cocaine, they will report the location of food even when it’s of lower quality.

Foraging bees find it rewarding to lead other bees to food sources; therefore, when cocaine stimulates their brain’s reward system, bees will report the location of food when they normally would

not—just for the reward. This was the first case of a human-like reward system being identified in an insect brain, Robinson says.

The parallels between the reward system in bee and human brains offer clues to the mysteries of addiction and treatment. Researchers now hope to identify the neural pathways that the drug targets in bees to learn more about the mechanisms of addiction.



Report Predicts How Global Warming Will Hit Home in Chicago

Ninety years from now, the Chicago fire could be a good description of the heat on the streets, not just a reference to the blaze that destroyed the city in 1871.

According to findings in the recently released report *Climate Change and Chicago*, published by the city and commissioned by Mayor Richard Daley in 2006, by the year 2100, the number of summer days over 90 degrees in Chicago could reach as many as 80 in one year and the number of days over 100 degrees could be close to 30.

Don Wuebbles, an LAS professor in atmospheric sciences who was lead author of the report, led the scientific analysis, using a little more than 100 years of weather data collected at 15 stations in the Chicago area. The result was Chicago’s first long-range climate forecast.

In addition to examining the effects of global warming on temperatures and precipitation, the report analyzes what this means for

human health and welfare, air quality, disease outbreaks, hydrology, local ecosystems, and Chicago’s infrastructure and economy. For instance, there would be more heat waves such as the one that baked Chicago in 1995, which led to almost 700 deaths.

According to Wuebbles, Chicago is one of the first large cities to make this kind of an assessment and the first to determine specific steps it will take to reduce its emissions of carbon dioxide, which accounts for nearly half of the total emissions of the state of Illinois. The city has set the ambitious goal of an 80 percent reduction in 1990 levels of carbon dioxide emissions by the year 2050.

For more details, go to the Chicago Climate Action Plan website at www.chicagoclimateaction.org.



Older Kindergarteners Have Only a Fleeting Edge

New research challenges a growing trend toward holding kids out of kindergarten until they’re older, arguing that academic advantages are short-lived and come at the expense of delaying entry into the workforce and other costs.

The findings show older kindergartners fare better academically largely because they learn more before starting school, not because age improves aptitude, says Darren Lubotsky, a University of Illinois economics professor who co-wrote the study.



Older students post higher test scores than younger peers during the first few months of kindergarten, but their edge soon fades and nearly vanishes by eighth grade, according to the study.

“If it were true that older kids are able to learn at a faster rate, then the differences in test scores should get bigger as kids progress and the material gets more difficult. But we really see the opposite,” Lubotsky says.

The findings counter decades of research linking age to academic achievement that has led states to push back kindergarten entrance age deadlines and convinced more parents to start children later than the once-traditional age of 5.

In 2002, nearly 21 percent of 5-year-olds were not yet enrolled in kindergarten, up from less than 10 percent in 1980, according to the study, co-written by former

U of I economist Todd Elder, now a professor at Michigan State University.

Though older students have an early edge based on an extra year of skill development, the study maintains that older and younger students learn at the same pace once they enter school, based on a review of federal education data.

The study found, for example, that older kindergartners scored 24 percentage points higher than younger peers on standardized reading tests, but the gap narrowed to less than 4 percentage points by eighth grade.

“Kids learn a lot before kindergarten, especially if they’re in preschool. One way to think about it is that the oldest kid in kindergarten has about 20 percent more life experience,” Lubotsky says. “But once they start, they basically learn at the same rate.”

Based on the findings, Lubotsky says parents and lawmakers need to weigh costs and benefits as they consider when to start kids in kindergarten.

“Older kids may do better at first, but there’s a tradeoff,” he says. “They’re also a year in school behind other kids their own age. At the end of the line, somehow that year will catch up to them. They start work a year later, and parents have an extra year of child-care costs if they delay entry. So it’s not free.”

Words of War and Holocaust



Wary of fading memories, a history professor studied diaries and letters and found that ordinary Germans, living under fear of destruction by enemies, seriously contemplated Nazi ideology during World War II even as news of the Holocaust swept the nation.

“People made an effort to try to understand and come to terms with Nazism, which framed itself as a new epoch ... that wasn’t going to leave anytime soon,” says Peter Fritzsche, author of *Life and Death in the Third Reich*.

Fritzsche, whose parents are from Germany, was named a finalist for McGill University’s Cundhill International Prize in History. Reviewers hailed his book for its new insights into the lives and thoughts of Nazi-era Germans.

He says Germans knew of the Holocaust, but were unaware of its vastness. Despite widespread anti-Semitism, a majority of Germans did not support genocide, Fritzsche says. Diaries detailed tense conversations between families and troops on leave who witnessed or participated in the murders.

“[Family members] say, ‘It’s still murder,’” Fritzsche recounts. “And then the soldiers say, ‘I believe it’s a war for national survival. It’s us or them.’”



INTO AFRICA

Becoming the CEO of one of the world's largest conservation organizations is an instance where life, for this former English major, is better than fiction.

By Stephen J. Lyons

The CEO of the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) often likes to challenge skeptics with a word association game. He will ask you to tell him the first thing that comes to mind when he says "Africa." Answers he usually gets are impoverished, Darfur, AIDS, or child soldier. But when you ask Patrick Bergin for his word, he says rich.



As CEO of the African Wildlife Foundation, Patrick Bergin believes in empowering local communities and governments in Africa to be stewards of their resources.

"I mean that in every sense of the word. Rich: economically, financially, culturally, and rich in terms of its heritage. Africa is a continent that most scientists overwhelmingly believe is the mother ship. It's where we all came from. It's where humanity began and when people go back to the east African savannas, it has this really dramatic effect on them. I somehow think the human spirit recognizes it as its birthplace because it resonates so strongly with most people."

The Illinois native son who grew up near Bloomington in minuscule Merma and went on to earn his bachelor's in English and his master's in agricultural education at the University of Illinois never imagined he would head a \$20 million conservation organization. Yet, looking back on his academic experience, Bergin sees some obvious links.

"I'm communicating with either leaders of African governments, international aid agencies like the World Bank, with our membership—we have about 70,000 members—people who give \$100 a year to be members of the African Wildlife Foundation, and I'm dealing with large grant-giving organizations like Ford, Rockefeller, Google, and all those sorts of people. It's all about language. It's about whether you can build and convey a powerful vision for what you're trying to achieve.

"My major was in English. What I always felt, and what my parents always felt, was that the liberal arts in general—and, hopefully, a good use of the English language—form a powerful foundation for all sorts of careers. Almost regardless of what you want to go into, the ability to think critically, read, and use language in a powerful way is going to help you."

Bergin's ability to communicate (he speaks fluent Swahili, the lingua franca of eastern Africa) is key to his job. The African Wildlife Foundation began in 1961 as a creation of the Washington Safari Club. Today, its goal is not only to create and preserve large tracts of habitat for animals, but

also to empower local Africans to be that continent's stewards of their own resources. A stint in the Peace Corps left Bergin well aware of the dismal track record of colonialism and the condescending way in which the rest of the world practices conservation in Africa. Now in his 18th year with the organization and sixth year as its CEO, Bergin is determined to not make the same mistake.

"There is this perception that conservation is a white man's game and that it's a western priority. When people think of conservation in Africa they think of Jane Goodall, Richard Leakey, or Dian

Fossey. Even today when you turn on Discovery Channel, National Geographic, or Animal Planet, it's always about someone from the West who goes in to save Africa.

"Our staff is over 85 percent black African. It's very unusual [of AWF] in the world of conservation. Our own president [of AWF] in Africa is a black African woman, Helen Gichohi. In most of the countries where we work, the senior representative is a black African with a PhD who is an experienced conservationist. We think this is real important because African people and African governments are suspicious of always being preached to by western organizations saying, 'Well, you should conserve your wildlife, you should do this and this and this.'"

Two retired African heads of state are on the AWF's board of trustees: Sir Ketumile Masire, the former president of Botswana, and former Tanzanian President Benjamin

W. Mkapa. Bergin says both Botswana and Tanzania serve as great examples of successful African-created conservation areas.

Recent successes include establishing the 890,000-acre Lomako Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The reserve is the only place on the planet where the pygmy chimpanzees, "bonobos," exist. Bergin did what he

Continued on page 21

A Biochemist's Fight Against AIDS

University of Illinois alumna works to combat this deadly disease in honor of her brother.

By Dave Evensen

Deborah Paul was three years older than her brother, Tim, but in many ways she looked up to him. For starters he stood at 6'3", but he also connected with people in a way that his sister, the introverted one, admired.

Tim worked as a computer programmer but he was an artist at heart. He played piano in clubs and stage productions and made reams of friends. When Deborah (MS '79, biology) went to her 10th high school reunion, she brought along her brother because he knew as many people there as she did.

The swollen lymph node that sent Tim to the hospital one day puzzled doctors. It passed, but two years later, in 1984, they realized it was only the beginning of a new epidemic. Tim was among the first wave of gay men to be diagnosed with HIV.

The fight against HIV and its fatal end product, AIDS, an immune system disease, was then in its infancy. Deborah was a doctoral student at the Medical College of Virginia. Looking for hope, she would follow doctors as they visited AIDS patients and assessed different treatments. Nothing was working.

Months slipped by and Tim's illness worsened. Deborah finished school and was hired as a biochemist at Abbott Laboratories, a leader in HIV research. Her background was in Hepatitis B, but she arrived at Abbott in early 1985 with a desire to join the fight against her brother's disease. Her previous work on Hepatitis B—a bug similar to HIV—made her ideal for the job.

Just two months after she started, however, Tim ran out of time. Worn down by bouts of opportunistic diseases moving in on his weakened immune system, he died in March 1985. He was 28.

More than 7,000 people in the United States died of AIDS in 1985, according to government estimates, including the film star Rock Hudson. In retrospect, however, one could argue that one of the most momentous victims was Tim because of who he left behind.

Some two decades later Deborah, 54, still works at Abbott. She's in management now, well-liked and experienced, and occupying a window office where every couple of minutes are marked by the sight of a jet thundering in or out of nearby O'Hare International Airport. Her laboratory days are past, but signs of what she did there are not.

One of them hangs on her wall. It's a U.S. patent she earned during her long fight against HIV.

* * *

Conventional thinking in 1985 was that HIV itself couldn't be detected, at least not practically. Instead, doctors diagnosed HIV with an antibody test based on the immune system's response, which wouldn't register until months after the initial infection.

But Deborah wondered if they were missing a chance to spot HIV earlier, in the blood, before it reached its destination. She knew that an antigen test could spot Hepatitis B in the bloodstream, and she wondered if a similar test would work for HIV.

The implications were potentially life-saving. Such a test could more effectively screen HIV-positive donated blood, and it would allow doctors to monitor the virus and measure the effect of antiviral drugs. It could also say more definitively whether at-risk newborns had HIV, as antibody tests were inconclusive since infants received antibodies from their mothers.



Deborah's task was enormous. She worked against not only prevailing assumptions but also an elusive bug. While Hepatitis B produces excess bundles of protein, making it easier to spot, HIV's attack is leaner, with no excess at all as it takes over white blood cells and infects them with its own DNA.

The work required countless, solitary hours of testing, retesting, and doubting in a lab along the Chicago waterfront. They asked if Deborah minded working alone in the basement. No, she said. After Tim's death, she needed to be alone.

Her former boss, Richard Decker (MS '58, biochemistry)—who headed the team that developed the Hepatitis B antigen test in the early 1970s—recalls getting an unexpected call from Deborah while he was in Geneva, Switzerland. Using a combination of human, rabbit, and goat antibodies, she had done it. She spotted HIV in the blood.

Deborah had trouble convincing people. One journal reviewer wrote back, simply, "I don't believe it." Her testing withstood scrutiny, however, and before long the Food and Drug Administration sought her test for screening donated blood.

Her antigen test was patented in 1988.

HIV diagnostics has since moved on, with screeners relying on more sensitive nucleic acid tests, but Deborah's test was used for years. Decker still refers to her as a pioneer because she proved you could find HIV in the blood.

"She had a conviction," he says. "And she wanted to do something that was relevant and important to the cause."

Her fight didn't end there. She was part of a partnership between Abbott's diagnostics and pharmaceuticals divisions to test drugs against live specimens of HIV. Drugmakers would send over



The death of her brother, Tim, from AIDS in 1985 at age 28 inspired Deborah Paul's effort to develop a blood test and resistance drugs for HIV.

Continued on page 20



Deborah Paul in her lab at Abbott.

different drug combinations, and Deborah and colleagues would test them against the virus. They went through hundreds of samples until finally something worked.

The end result, a drug called Norvir, worked as a protease inhibitor that, when teamed up with older analog drugs, kept HIV off balance, giving it too many obstacles and prolonging an HIV victim's life for years, possibly decades.

Deborah's eyes still light up when she recalls her successes in the laboratory. While she'd like to say that it helped her cope with Tim's death, however, she knows better. That pain is separate. It fades with time, Deborah says, but it never goes away. And so even while reflecting on her success, part of her says this: She was too late.

Today Deborah still fights HIV, albeit not quite so directly. She's taught college courses, and this aerobics instructor of 25 years has done aerobics marathons to raise money for HIV/AIDS research. She recently created an endowment at U of I, named after herself and her brother, which will fund research in infectious disease and immunology.

"This just seemed the perfect opportunity to leave something that hopefully will have an enduring impact and also honor Tim's memory," she says.

Before he died, Tim realized what Deborah was trying to do. Shortly before she started her work on HIV, as a gift for earning her doctoral degree, he gave her a sapphire and diamond heart necklace and a subscription to one of her favorite magazines, *Nature*. She still has his note.

It turns out Tim was proud of his big sister, too. ■

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
LAS ALUMNI AWARDS
 Deadline for Nominations: May 1, 2009
 Nominations are being sought for the College of Liberal Arts and Science's annual alumni awards. Help honor individuals who have distinguished themselves through their professional achievement, service to humanity, or leadership in the college.
 For more information and to submit a nomination online, see: www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/awards or call: (217) 333-3387.

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Every year, 130,000 LAS alumni have the chance to nominate their choices for the LAS Alumni Achievement Award. We are proud to announce the four who brought home the gold in 2008.

Govindjee

An Absorbing Interest

Govindjee is "perhaps the world's most recognized photosynthesis researcher," says Donald Ort, University of Illinois professor of plant physiology. "His research contributions have been paradoxically far-reaching and diverse."

Just as a plant absorbs light and creates energy, Govindjee's career has been one of absorbing everything he could learn about photosynthesis and then transforming it into energy—or, as one former student calls it, "an infectious enthusiasm."

Douglas L. Cole

The Invisible World

Douglas Cole says he has always been fascinated with chemistry's ability "to manipulate reality at the invisible level." But, as he soon found out, working at the invisible level can have a highly visible impact on the world. Over his 34-year career, he helped to develop a long line of pharmaceuticals that confront problems ranging from cholesterol and cancer to AIDS and anemia.

Cole received his PhD in organic chemistry from U of I in 1974 and spent his early years with Merck, Sharp, and Dohme, Inc. and American Cyanamid-Lederle, where he first worked in drug development—taking newly discovered drugs to market.

William A. Edelstein

Leaving High-Tech Fingerprints

William Edelstein called it "spin warp" imaging. This technique, which he developed in the late 1970s, made it possible to create the first recognizable image of a whole human body using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

Edelstein received his bachelor's in physics from the University of Illinois in 1965 and spent most of his career with General Electric (GE), where he helped make it the leading company in MRI technology.

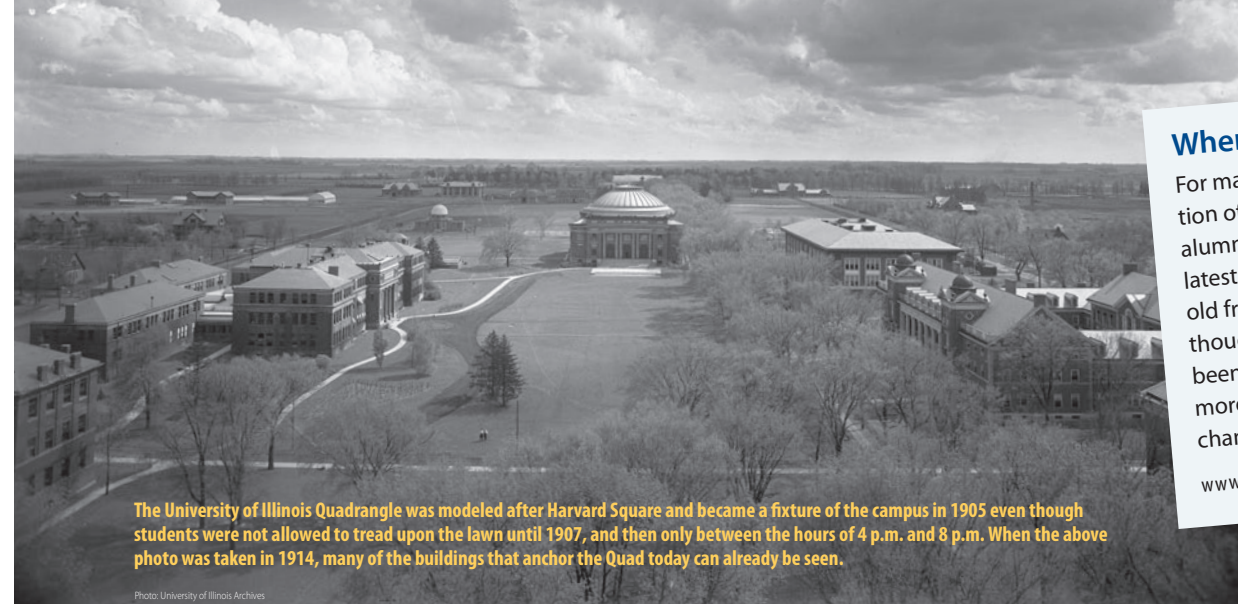
At GE, Edelstein pioneered clinical imaging at high magnetic fields, greatly improving MRI images. For instance, he collaborated on the "birdcage" imaging coil, which made it possible to create such good images that Edelstein says some people thought they "must have cheated."

Carol D. Lee

Taking Bloom in the Whirlwind

Carol D. Lee says she was "a child of the times"—the 1960s, when society was caught in a whirlwind of change. Since then, she has been committed to helping minority students bloom in the midst of "whirlwinds" of their own, such as poverty, negative stereotypes, and a culture of low expectations. In 1966, Lee received her bachelor's from U of I in the teaching of secondary school English and began teaching in Chicago. Then in 1969, she co-founded the Institute of Positive Education in Chicago, a community-based, African-centered organization that ran classes, a food co-op and farm, and a magazine.

Additional information of each awardee can be seen at www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/awards.



The University of Illinois Quadrangle was modeled after Harvard Square and became a fixture of the campus in 1905 even though students were not allowed to tread upon the lawn until 1907, and then only between the hours of 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. When the above photo was taken in 1914, many of the buildings that anchor the Quad today can already be seen.

Photo: University of Illinois Archives

Where Are Class Notes?

For many years, the Class Notes section of *LAS News* has been a place for alumni to reconnect and find out the latest about former classmates and old friends. Changing with the times, though, these printed notes have now been moved online so you'll have more room to submit photos and exchange news.

www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/magazine/classnotes

Into Africa *continued from page 18*

does best: bringing together government and local communities. Recently, the AWF has also brought private ranches in Tanzania under conservation.

A typical year for Bergin is six months in Nairobi, Kenya, and six months in Washington, D.C. A "normal" day might be negotiating land deals with African heads of state in Tanzania or setting up a partnership with his counterpart at John Deere in Moline.

"I've gotten so used to it that I just wake up in the morning and it doesn't faze me at all. When I'm in Washington I do things the Washington way; if I'm in Congo and the lights don't work and there's no water in the faucet,



Bergin's travels can take him from major metropolitan cities to places in Africa that are only accessible by foot, or in this case, canoe.

it just doesn't faze me. Both of those experiences have become part of my reality."

The reality is that it's a good thing Bergin is single. Fundraising is a constant. He pulls out his date book and recounts the following for a two-month period: "I had conversations with the people at Google Foundation in Mountain View, California. I met with the MacArthur Foundation in Chicago. I went to Tunisia to meet with the African Development Bank. I went to Stockholm to meet with the Swedish government. I went to Seattle to meet with Starbucks."

"You're talking to very interested and engaged people in their own fields and the travel can get hard, but talking to people about what we do is far from drudgery."

When Bergin needs to enjoy family life, all he has to do is visit one of his eight brothers and sisters and their children. Younger brother Michael is an Illinois alumnus who works with computer software, and sisters Molly and Kate work in Chicago in the banking industry.

Although conservation is a big component of AWF's goals, Bergin is at heart a rural sociologist who is adept at informal methods of educating adults in rural areas. That interest has led the organization to adopt the Charlotte Conservation Fellows Program, which provides funding for master's and doctoral degrees to the next generation of African wildlife experts.

Africa stands at a critical crossroads, Bergin says. There is no doubt the continent wants to modernize, but how to leave the Third World while still preserving Africa's critical planetary inventory of flora and fauna is perhaps its greatest challenge.

"I am optimistic that we will convince a growing number of African countries that they can have it both ways. That they can have modernization in their cities and farms and still set aside through careful planning areas that protect wildlife." ■

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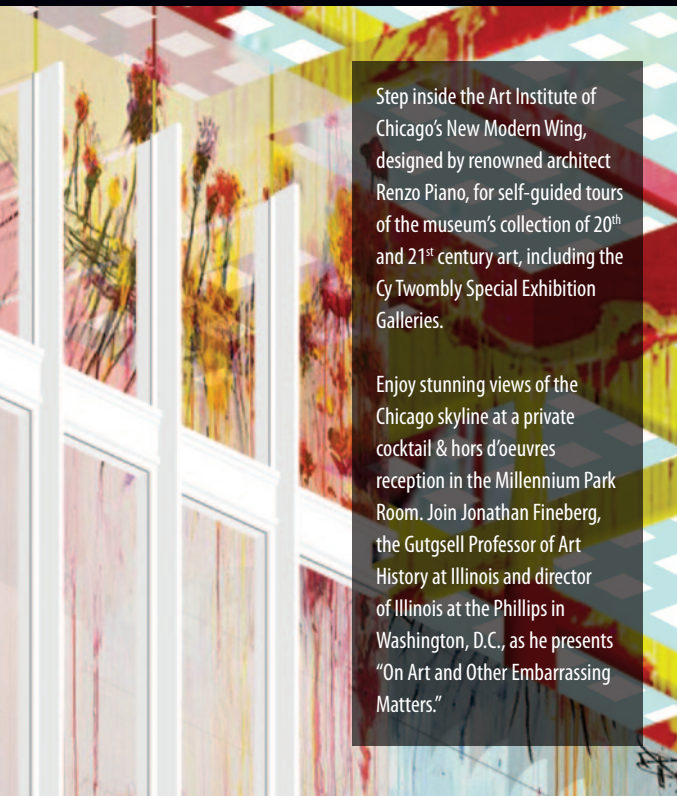
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Enjoy stunning views of the Chicago skyline at a private cocktail & hors d'oeuvres reception in the Millennium Park Room. Join Jonathan Fineberg, the Gutzwill Professor of Art History at Illinois and director of Illinois at the Phillips in Washington, D.C., as he presents "On Art and Other Embarrassing Matters."

New Modern Wing

Thursday, June 18, 2009
5:30 p.m.

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Chicago, IL

Registration Fee: \$75
Registration Deadline: Friday, May 29, 2009
Reservations are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

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This event is partially funded by a gift from the late Katherine Wolcott Walker, former LAS Alumni Association Board President and 1997 Distinguished Service Award honoree.

March 2009

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An Unlikely Hero
A few years ago, surprised to see War II fighter more than 60

Diaries and Letters Prove World War II
Wary of fading memories, and letters to learn what darkest eras. He found deep even as most Germans opp

New Brazilian Studies Institute Positions Illinois to Be a National Leader
The largest bell in the Altgeld Hall bell tower was

Lincoln Remembered

U of I historian and author of *Age of Lincoln*, Vernon Burton, shares highlights from the remarkable life of President Abraham Lincoln in monthly essays, which you may read at www.las.illinois.edu/news/lincoln.