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Prospectus News



A student produced publication since 1969

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Wednesday, December 1, 2010

Vol. 03 No. 03

Parkland service learning gives back to community

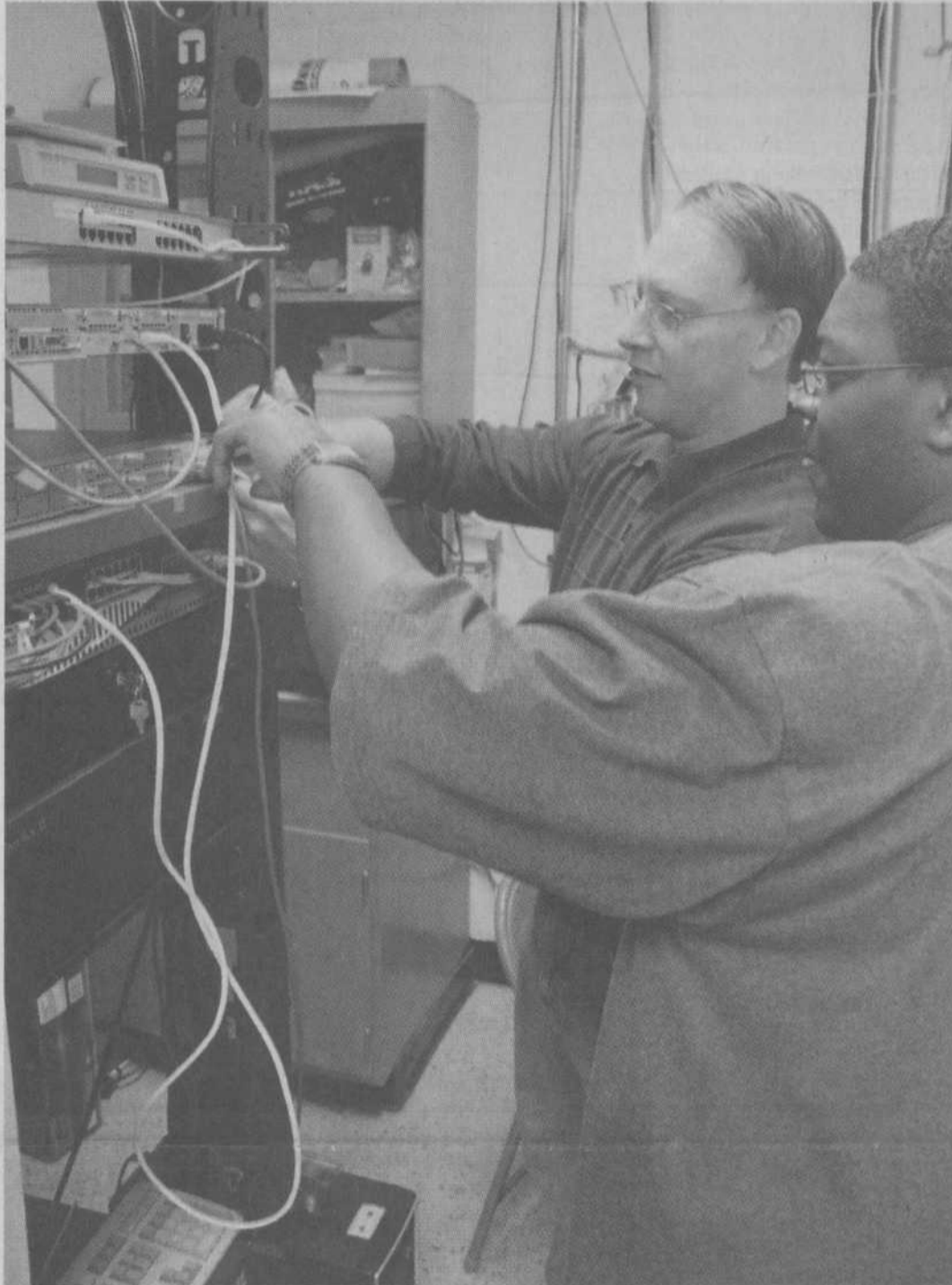
Sean HERMANN
Publications Manager

Community Colleges are known for serving the surrounding communities and Parkland College is taking that to heart. By incorporating service-learning projects into the curriculum, many courses are able to provide real world experience to students, while giving back to the community. Instructor and Program Manager of Network Administration, Marc Schudel's CSC 150 students just recently finished a service-learning project at Unity High School in Tolono, aiding with a struggling battle in incorporating new technology into the school.

The goal of the project: Provide wireless Internet coverage for the majority of the high school to support the schools mobile computer labs.

The high school's previous setup was inefficient and unsatisfactory by professional standards, providing poor signal to a small percentage of the school. Fortunately for Unity, Parkland was able to meet the needs of the school, and pass on knowledge to others as well. Eighty percent of the school is now covered and all but five classrooms have wireless access. While it may seem like a simple goal, there were many factors contributing to many different aspects of the project.

"As with any project the first step is to evaluate the end users expectations to ensure they are factored into the design and are feasible from a finan-



Students from Marc Schudel's CSC 150 course work on setting up wireless Internet coverage at Unity High School in Tolono.

Sean HERMANN/Prospectus

cial standpoint," Schudel said as he explained the project's development. "The students had several variables to consider that have a large impact on the design and implementation of the equipment. After the initial design phase, the students performed a physical site survey to verify our deployment strategy would fulfill the requirements identified in the discovery phase." The students then deployed access points, wireless controllers, routers, and switches to support the network, and later went into the final testing and documentation stage of the project, which was completed just before Thanksgiving.

The students and faculty from both schools were grateful for the opportunity to work together and it was a win-win situation for all.

"I am really happy to be part of the work being done at Tolono. I never expected to get such an awesome hands-on project to be able to work on while taking the wireless class at Parkland College. I am very much a hands-on person, and it is really helping me learn wireless technology. The cool part about the Tolono project is that I get to see firsthand what it takes to implement a wireless network and how to connect it to an existing network," said Parkland student Joshua Hall.

While the new wireless setup at Unity will help current students, faculty and staff, the future of Unity will benefit as well. "The benefits of mobile technology are finding their way into the secondary class-

room at Unity High School," said Tim Gateley, Assistant Principal at Unity High School. "Ipad and Itouch technology brings many new and innovative ways to deliver instruction and assess mastery, but one element that is key is a stable, reliable, secure network environment. At Unity, we feel that we have a wireless solution that will make these devices useful in the classroom. With the assistance of Parkland and CDW-G (Cisco) our students and staff will be able to utilize mobile technology to enhance instruction."

Both parties involved worked hard and were in it together from the start. Students from Schudel's course were insistent on taking on the project and took it from there. "As soon as I had the opportunity I asked, how would you like to make this a class project? I saw this as great opportunity to take the alphabet soup of IEEE standards that comprise wireless networking and practice them in the real world. After discussing the scope of this project with the students it was unanimous that we wanted to do this thing," said Schudel. Once again, Parkland College has made the surrounding community a happy camper and service-learning projects proved their potential to be a worthwhile experience for all.

Parkland stands out at national summit

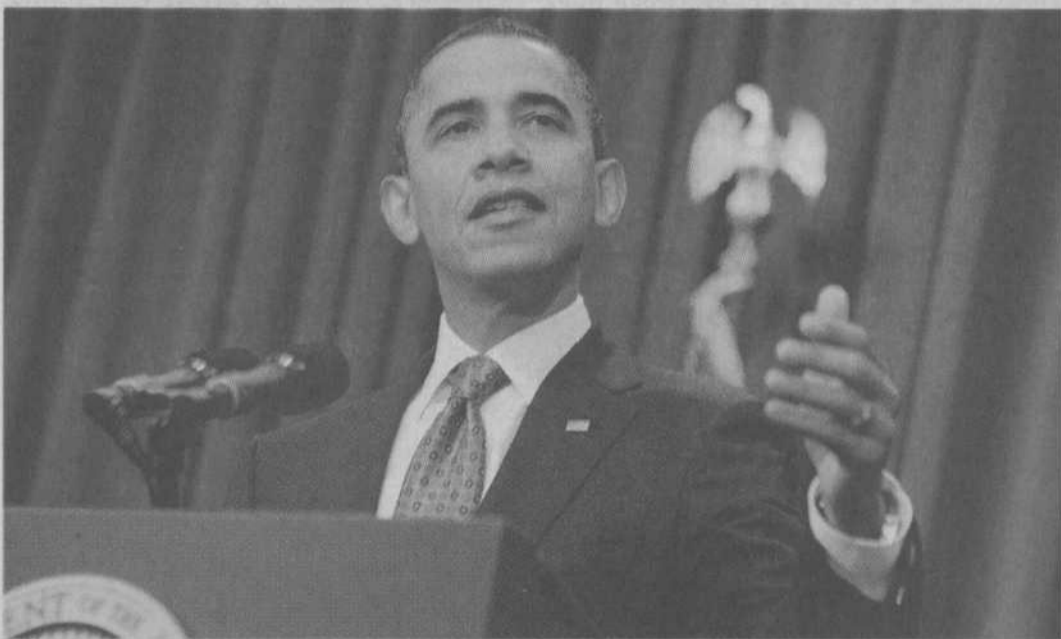
Kelley HEANEY
Staff Writer

October 5, 2010 may be remembered as a historic day in community college history. That's the day that the White House held its first ever Community College Summit. In attendance were around 150 representatives of community college and non-profit organizations, including Melinda Gates of The Gates Foundation, members of President Obama's staff, Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, and former Parkland College president, Zelema Harris. Also in attendance was Parkland College Trustee, Tom Bennett, who recently gave a presentation about his trip and the opportunities that are now opening as community colleges nationwide were given the chance to shine.

Bennett has been a Parkland Trustee since 1999 and recently served as the 2009-2010 Chair for the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). Bennett has also taken several Parkland College classes, making him all too familiar of the struggles of being a student.

As a trustee at Parkland, Bennett reported on his summit experience at a symposium that was open to the public. He explained that he returned to Parkland with information but not answers. According to Bennett the summit didn't "solve any of the world's problems, but it did put light on the community college."

Bennett then went on to describe how, after the opening speeches, the crowd broke into six subject-based groups,



President Barack Obama delivers a statement at the first ever Community College Summit held at the White House in Washington, DC.

Olivier Douliery/Abaca Press/MCT

each with an important topic to discuss. In the two-hour window set aside for the discussions, twenty-five people could participate in one of the following groups: Pathway to Baccalaureate, Increasing Community College Completion, Affordability: Financial Aid to Community College Students, Community Colleges in the 21st Century, The Importance of Community Colleges to Veterans and Military Families, and Industry-Community College Partnerships.

To his surprise, Bennett learned that some of Parkland's highlights, such as the Distance and Virtual Learning program, prompted much interest. Using this agenda, he was able to participate in the "Community Colleges in the Twenty-First Century" session, along with Melinda Gates, Secretary of Homeland Security,

Janet Napolitano, and the President of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), Dr. George Boggs, discussing the general question: How are community colleges innovating to meet the needs of the 21st century students and employers?"

Several themes were approached and Bennett explained Parkland's online education programs and how the "non-traditional" student of yesterday is now considered the standard.

The White House website Summit Toolkit session summary stated "Online learning opens new possibilities for many students who might not otherwise be able to attend a community college." The group acknowledged that college students today cover a wide range of students from rural and urban areas, young

and old, as well as working students and those raising families—in addition to the traditional youth straight out of high school. Online technology helps many of these students who can only attend school consistently by online means. Even the employed person facing company changes, such as going green, may need training updates, which can be achieved much more conveniently through online courses.

After Dr. Bennett's summit presentation to the Parkland College gathering, the floor was open to questions and comments. One of the issues of concern was the lack of balance between the community college calendar and the calendar of the four year schools. Parkland has a 16 week calendar while the University has a 15 week calendar. It was conferred that community col-

leges are bound by laws, set by the local and federal governments, about the number of days that classes must be offered. The current number is 75 days, with Parkland generally scheduling 77, to help ensure no problems with bad weather. But the university appears to not be bound by any such rule and has, over the past several years, shortened its academic calendar by as much as a week, according to the person commenting. (Especially in question was the Thanksgiving break, which appears to have changed in 2000 at the U of I to include a week long break rather than starting at 5 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the holiday, www.senate.il.edu). This has caused a general problem with students who attend both schools. These students leave to spend the holidays at home, and skip Parkland classes. Semester beginnings and endings also do not match, causing problems for students who attend both schools. Dr. Bennett said that was an issue he was unaware of and would have to look into.

Other questions that were raised at the summit included, "What can be done to reduce barriers to affordability for community college students?" was addressed by the Affordability: Financial Aid to community college Students group.

As every student knows, classes aren't cheap. Nor are the textbooks, supplies, and other extra charges that are applied, not to mention the time away from work. Many students attend a two-year college due to lower fees than a four-year university. They

receive credit for general education requirements, along with an associate's degree, and then proceed to those four-year institutions.

But sometimes life gets in the way, making that money and/or times an issue. The Summit Toolkit stated, "Several studies have shown that most dropouts leave college because they have trouble going to school while working to support themselves." It also said that "community college students are much less likely, despite being disproportionately low-income, to apply for financial aid compared to students at four-year institutions."

This makes them more susceptible to leaving school before degree completion due to financial difficulties. That, in turn, affects the school's graduation rate, making it appear as though students aren't being well served and casting a dim light on the community college reputation in general. Many students who do apply for financial assistance, often have unmet needs, even when aid is awarded, since often other expenses are not covered in the aid received.

The Pathways to Baccalaureate group addressed the question of "How to ease the transfer process from two-year to four-year schools, ensuring that students who start at community college earn their baccalaureate degrees?" The Toolkit pages maintain, "Minority and low-income students are concentrated in community colleges and depend on effective transfer to achieve their baccalaureate degree." Often,

Summit continued on P.3

Prospectus

The Prospectus is a student publication, and is published weekly during the Fall and Spring semesters, intermittently in summer. To contact the Parkland Prospectus:
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• The rules of correspondence: all submissions must be signed with a phone number and address. The Prospectus staff must verify the identity of letter writers. Correspondence may be edited to accommodate the space requirements of the paper. The deadline for all submissions is 12 p.m. of the Friday immediately before the upcoming issue.



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CHUCK SHEPHERD'S NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Lead Story

Surreal Estate: Sixty-two percent of the 12 million people of Mumbai, India, live in slums, but the city is also home to Mukesh Ambani's 27-story private residence (37,000 square feet, 600 employees serving a family of five), reported to cost about \$1 billion. According to an October New York Times dispatch, there are "terraces upon terraces," "four-story hanging gardens," "airborne swimming pools," and a room where "artificial weather" can be created. A local domestic worker told the Times (after noting that both she and Ambani are "human being(s)") that she has difficulty understanding why the Ambanis have so much while she struggles on the equivalent of \$90 a month.

Can't Possibly Be True

Stacey Herald, 36, of Dry Ridge, Ky., is 28 inches tall, with a rare condition called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, which causes brittle bones and underdeveloped organs — provoking doctors' warnings that childbirth could cause the fetus to crush Stacey's lungs and heart (and produce a baby susceptible for life to broken legs and arms). However, to the delight of husband Wil, 27 (and 69 inches tall), Stacey recently gave birth to baby No. 3 and promised more. The middle child, 2, without OI, is already a foot taller than Stacey, but the other two are afflicted, with the recent one (according to a July ABC News report) 5 inches long at birth, weighing 2 pounds, 10 ounces.

Prolific:

In October, police arrested a man arriving at the Madras, India, airport from Sri Lanka, bringing precious stones into the country in his stomach. After employing laxatives, police recovered 2,080 diamonds.

Last Words

In May, when a fox terrier answered a call of nature in the yard of notoriously lawn-fastidious Charles Clements, 69, in Chicago, Clements confronted the dog's 23-year-old owner. That led to mutual bravado, which continued even after Clements pulled a gun. The dog-walker was killed immediately after shouting "Next time you pull out a pistol, why don't you use it."

Inexplicable

More than 4,450 activities are federal crimes, and

300,000 federal regulations carry potential criminal penalties, according to an October feature by McClatchy Newspapers, and to illustrate its point that Congress has gone overboard in creating "crimes," McClatchy pointed to a Miami seafood importer. Abner Schoenwetter, 64, just finished a six-year stretch in prison for the crime of contracting to purchase lobster tails from a Honduran seller whom federal authorities learned was violating lobster-harvest regulations.

DNA evidence has exonerated 261 convicted criminals (including 17 on death row), but more interesting, according to professor Brandon Garrett of the University of Virginia Law School, more than 40 such exonerations have been of criminals who falsely confessed to "their" crimes. "I beat myself up a lot," Eddie Lowery told The New York Times in September. Lowery had falsely admitted raping a 75-year-old woman and served a 10-year sentence before being cleared. "I thought I was the only dummy who did that." Lowery's (nearly logical) explanation was typical: Weary from high-pressure police interrogation, he gave up and told them what they wanted to hear, figuring to get a lawyer to straighten everything out — except that, by that time, the police had his confession on video, preserved for the jury.

More Things to Worry About

Clownmania:

Performers in New York's traveling Bindlestiff Family Cirkus protested in October against political campaign language referring to Washington, D.C., as a "circus. Said Kinko the Clown, "Before you call anyone in Washington a clown, consider how hard a clown works."

"Tiririca" ("Grumpy"), a professional clown, was elected by resounding vote to the Brazilian Congress from Sao Paulo in October under the slogan "It Can't Get Any Worse."

Least Competent Criminals

Recurring Themes:

John Stolarz, 69, became the latest just-released prisoner to return immediately to his criminal calling, by attempting a holdup of a Chase Bank in New York City instead of reporting to his halfway house on the day after his release. (The robbery failed because the "bank" was actually just a Chase customer-service branch, with no money.)

"My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy" raises a toast to the jerks, Kanye included

Greg KOT
Chicago Tribune

KANYE WEST "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy" 3 stars

It's sometimes easy to overlook, given that Kanye West can't seem to go three months without being written off as a jerk, but he has made some of the decade's most resonant,

ing piano notes, while a deep, mushrooming bass tone threatens to swallow everything. Brusque cello strokes contrast with elegiac violins, while a dirty guitar wends through the string section like a drunk, splattering mud on the white-tablecloth beauty. It's a turbulent combination of sounds: brooding and chastened in the verses, oddly triumphant and darkly humorous during the choruses.

the last half of the album, West explores relationships that burn fast and burn out even faster — a metaphor if there ever was one for the express lane of celebrity in which he finds himself.

"Hell of a Life" is the temporary high, a mixture of metal strut, Gothic keyboards and a bender gone off the rails. "Blame Game" is the morning after, fragile and broken, with a raw, mocking, lacerating coda by Chris Rock. On "Lost in the World," West could be talking about a would-be lover or his relationship with fame and his fans, or both: "You're my devil, you're my angel. ... You're my freedom, you're my jail."

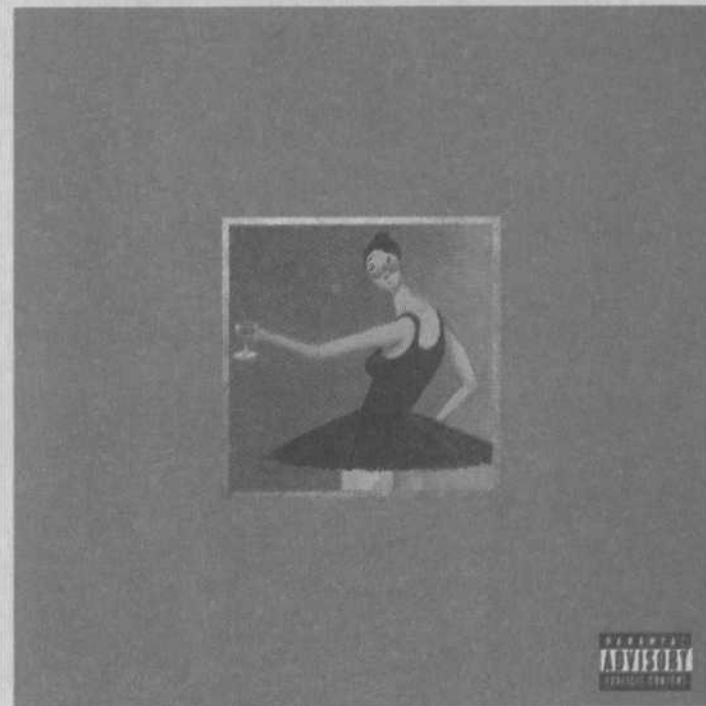
West gives the last word to Gil Scott-Heron, whose "Comment No.1" is excerpted on the final track, "Who Will Survive in America?" On the original 1970 spoken-word piece, Scott-Heron criticized the revolutionary youth movement of the '60s for failing to grasp the more basic needs of the African-American community. West edits down Scott-Heron's work but retains its essence, that of an African-American male who feels cut off from his country and culture.

More than anything, West wants to be understood, but on his terms — a difficult, if not impossible wish given all the baggage he's accumulated. His desperation and frustration were readily apparent as he stammered around in his recent, supremely awkward interview on NBC's "Today" show. He was trying to deal with his latest controversy, President George W. Bush's assertion that West's racially motivated remarks about Hurricane Katrina were "the lowest point of my presidency."

But even when West plays a card as hackneyed and unsympathetic as the poor, misunderstood pop star, he does it with nearly unparalleled aplomb and complexity. He does it defiantly, but also with a streak of melancholy and humor, and delivers it with wicked music, as if being portrayed as a pariah somehow empowers him. On the exhilarating "Power," he admits he's "lost in translation with a whole ... nation."

"You got the power to let power go," he tells himself. Yes, he has the freedom of choice to leave all the drama behind, and a menacing laugh rises from the mix as if daring him to do it. But with his mix of ego, sensitivity, neediness and talent, West leaves no doubt that he never will.

(c) 2010, Chicago Tribune.



ambitious pop music.

On his fifth studio album, "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy" (Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam), he owns his contradictions. What makes him so off-putting — his almost pathological allegiance to expressing his emotions, unfiltered — is also what makes him so compelling.

Because of West's let-it-blurt bluntness, he is definitely not getting a Christmas card this year from either Taylor Swift or former President George W. Bush. But that transparency makes "My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy" a terrific album.

Perhaps only West could turn all the hatred that has been directed at him into "Runaway," a surreal nine-minute anthem. In an elaborate video for the song, West positions himself at an upright piano between an opulent banquet table filled with guests dressed in white and a group of ballet dancers in black tutus. He hammers out a few notes, then stands teetering atop the piano, while asking his guests to raise a glass: "Let's have a toast for the douche bags. ... Let's have a toast for the scumbags," he sings, before advising, "Run away as fast as you can."

Ostensibly sung by a groom to his new bride at a wedding, the song plays as an apology, a warning and a defiant manifesto. The music mirrors that complexity.

A midtempo funky-drummer beat glides underneath the melancholy, reverberat-

Much of the album has that feel, a collision of opulence and emptiness, a meditation on the disconnect between the artist's intent and the public's perception.

West is a long way from the character he portrayed on his 2004 debut album, "The College Dropout," the blue-collar, minimum-wage retail clerk who rapped about his life with frankness and humor. Now he's one of the world's biggest stars, with a multimillion-dollar recording budget and every indulgence at his fingertips.

West dives into the deep end of decadence and hedonism on the new album.

"Can we get much higher?" a voice whoops on the stage-setting "Dark Fantasy."

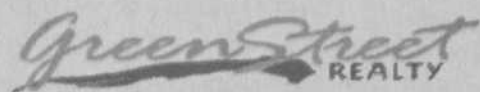
"Have you ever had sex with a pharaoh?" he leers on "Monster," while rhyming "esophagus" with "sarcophagus," surely a hip-hop first. Opulence is everywhere: Choirs roar, trumpets blow fanfares, strings swoop and swoon, harp-strings get down with brittle, Baroque panache.

Yet West is just as enamored of distortion and grime, with the electric guitars of "Gorgeous," the tribal drums of "Monster," a nod to Black Sabbath on "Hell of a Life."

West's characters are drunk on sex, power, their self-proclaimed exclusivity.

They are profane and boastful. Their every whim is sated, yet how come it feels so hollow?

Over several songs linked in



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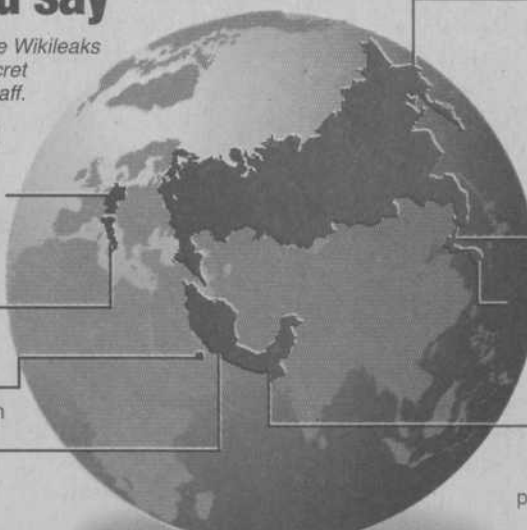
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Watch what you say

The controversial whistle-blowing site Wikileaks has released a cache of 250,000 secret messages sent by U.S. diplomatic staff.

Some key comments released

- Germany** Cables persuade officials not to issue arrest warrants for CIA agents accused of arresting a German citizen after mistaking him for an al-Qaeda suspect
- Italy** Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi referred to as "feckless, vain, and ineffective"
- Gulf State of Qatar** Said to be the "worst in the region" for anti-terrorism
- Iran** Several Arab leaders are quoted as urging an attack on Iran; President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad referred to as "Hitler"



- Russia** President Dmitry Medvedev said to be playing Robin to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's Batman
- North Korea** Kim Jong-il called a "flabby old chap"
- South Korea** U.S. has discussed plans for a united Korea should North Korea collapse
- Pakistan** Concern over radioactive material in nuclear power stations; fears it could be used in terror attacks

Source: Reuters, BBC Graphic: Malina Yingling © 2010 MCT

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Tony Noel Diesel Technology addition up and running

David BUSBOOM
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, November 17, the ribbon was cut for the official opening ceremony of the new addition to the Tony Noel Agricultural Technology Applications Center on Parkland's campus. Classroom and workshop space in the new addition will be used for the Case New Holland (CNH) Service Technician program, which prepares students to maintain and repair equipment used in a Case New Holland agriculture or construction dealership. Training includes



Members of the Parkland College Board of Trustees cut the ribbon to celebrate the official opening of the Tony Noel Diesel Technology addition as students and faculty look on.

Sean HERMANN/Prospectus

hydraulic systems, power train, electrical and electronic systems, and test procedures and diagnostic tools. The addition will be the primary lab for heavy equipment and large component teardown.

The construction of the Diesel Technology addition is part of a two-phase Master Plan for campus construction, renovation, and remodeling, and is the first of several such overhauls. The addition is approximately 17,000 square feet, and is attached to the south side of the existing Tony Noel facility.

The project was bid in January and work began in mid-

March, overseen by Director of Physical Plant Jim Bustard. By May, the concrete footings and foundation walls had been poured, as well as a portion of the concrete floor, and within a month the majority of the concrete masonry walls had been erected. In September the floors and steel structures of the walls and roof were complete, and by early October the project was finished. The addition will enter full use in January, 2011.

SUMMIT

continued from page 1

students spend a great deal of time and money, on classes that then don't transfer to the college they have chosen, leaving them to repeat the course, at a greater cost, or to take additional courses to transfer.

With the cost of four-year schools increasing at astronomical rates, retaking classes is frustrating and expensive for students and their families. Many families have turned to community colleges in an effort to save money by getting the general education courses at a cheaper price and then transferring to the four year school, but, when transfers don't happen as planned, everyone involved feels cheated, leading many to either not begin the process at what is viewed as a lesser school or to quit the process altogether.

"How are community colleges innovating to support military families and veterans and how can these innovations be brought to case?" was the issue of the Impor-

tance of Community Colleges to Veterans and Military Families group. The public is often told about how the returning veterans are not being properly reintroduced into society but are, rather, being dumped on the streets. This session took a look at what might be done to retrain our returning military, many of whom enlisted straight out of high school, never having had a job or college education. "Community colleges are an attractive option for military families and veterans because of their affordability, program choices, convenience, and the flexibility of class offerings." With the unique needs of these people, portable training is a plus, since they can often continue their courses online if moving from city to city. Training for those in demand skills also helps to simplify the shift into a new community.

Very few enroll at a school with the intention of failing or not completing the courses for their degree. Yet fewer than

3 out of 10 fulltime students receive their two-year degree in three years and the rate is even worse for part time students. Less than half of the students achieve their degree or transfer in six years. Parkland itself has a graduation rate of 27%, according to Parkland President, Tom Ramage, in the Summit symposium, stating that this was good in the state of Illinois. This was the issue for the Increasing community college Completion group, who faced the question "What can be done to ensure that those who go to community college finish and either transfer into a four-year institution or transition into a career?" Students stop attending classes for many reasons, including financial aid complications, lack of ability to select the proper courses or unable to get academic or social support at their school.

As the new century progresses, another question to be looked at is "What are the key factors of a successful commu-

nity college-industry partnership and how can this model best educate students and get them into jobs upon completion?" The group interested in Industry-Community College Partnerships discussed it with the knowledge that, in the next ten years, many new jobs are going to require some sort of higher education or special training. Colleges are looking at how best to collaborate with the area businesses, labor unions, large industry and other employers to develop training programs that meet their needs, as well as the needs of the student, and are still affordable. This also enables the business to develop strategies that help maximize their workforce and training programs, as well as plans for eventual job placement. Unfortunately there are currently no models to base this practice on.

There were also concerns that federal and local funding issues would become geared toward completion rates. With many of the dropout issues

seemingly beyond the role of the college, it was felt that a definition for success should be set. Many expressed trepidation about who would be setting the definitions and guidelines, and their qualifications. No one wants the government to mandate an unrealistic set of rules, not understanding the problems faced by the community college.

The White House Summit, while the first of its kind, doesn't seem to be the last as a future virtual summit has been proposed. In the meantime, many representatives returned to their schools with new information and ideas for implementing new programs. According to the November 2, Community College Times, community colleges in Maryland will host their own summit on December 3 in order to discuss what each establishment can do to achieve President Obama's goal of a supplementary 5 million graduates by the end of the decade. Jerry Sue Thornton, president of

Ohio's Cuyahoga Community College (CCC), acted on a student's response during the summit, who said that technology cannot replace person-to-person experiences. When she returned to her school, Thornton implemented a new student ambassador program, which will pair new students with more experienced students, and help them traverse the latest situation and stay on course to their degree completion. "Having someone to talk with is critical to their success," Thornton said, in the article written by Tabitha Whissemore.

Parkland is a great community college and the fact that the people in Washington are taking a closer look at community colleges on a national level serves as a great sign for the future. As to whether or not things will change in current standing, only time will tell, but the future is looking up for prospective students nationwide.



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Opinions

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Training better teachers

Camille ESCH
Los Angeles Times

It seems everyone is down on bad teachers these days. But the truth is that simply removing the bad apples won't fix our education problems. After all, it's not as if there's a large pool of superstar teachers waiting to replace those who are weeded out. Our best hope to improve education broadly and deeply is to strengthen the programs that develop and prepare the vast majority of the nation's teachers.

Unfortunately, many of those systems are in sorry shape. Research has found that teacher preparation programs across the country frequently have low admissions requirements, low exit criteria and a lack of academic rigor. Certainly there are some strong and innovative teacher training programs. But the vast bulk of teachers receive training that is disconnected from what they will experience in actual classrooms.

Coursework tends to be long on theory and short on practical training in such essentials as classroom management and how to actually teach specific subjects. The result is that beginning teachers often walk into their new schools with very little idea how to handle and teach a classroom full of kids.

This lack of preparation is unlikely to be measured - or even noticed. Few teacher education programs measure their graduates' success as teachers, or ask graduates or their employers to evaluate the quality or relevance of their preparation. Most school districts have no system in place for evaluating how new teachers from one program compare to those from another. Accreditation agencies monitor program quality at the institutions that train teachers, but they're funded by the very universities they're evaluating and tend to focus more on program design and materials rather than actual outcomes.

Although states are supposed to identify and assist programs that are low performing, they rarely do. Out of more than 1,400 colleges of education across the nation, states identify only 38 as having low-performing programs. That doesn't square with the widespread quality concerns raised by outside observers.

About a dozen years ago, Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., led a federal effort to establish a better quality-control system for teacher preparation programs. After a long and controversial battle with universities, he succeeded in getting a federal requirement that education schools must report certain outcomes, such as how many program completers pass teacher licensure tests. But that kind of information, besides being wildly inconsistent across states, says almost nothing about whether graduates are effective teachers.

Certainly the government shouldn't determine exactly what is taught, or how, in edu-

cation schools. But given the well-documented importance of teacher quality to educational success, government support for education schools should be leveraged to require colleges to get serious about teacher preparation.

That would mean tracking more meaningful measures of success, including information about whether graduates actually get (and keep) teaching jobs, what beginning teachers and their employers think of the quality of their preparation, and whether their teaching has a measurable effect on the achievement of students in the classroom. This kind of information would be invaluable to programs seeking to innovate, and to prospective teachers seeking an effective training program.

Sound impossible? It's not. Louisiana has developed a strong data system that allows it to track where graduates of different preparation programs go and what kind of effect they have on K-12 stu-

dent achievement. The state also asks new teachers to rate how well their teacher education programs prepared them for their first year of teaching.

In California, the Cal State system voluntarily surveys program graduates about the quality of their preparation, both at graduation time and during their first year of teaching. The university system also surveys the employers and supervisors of graduates and works with several large districts to determine whether the graduates of some programs are more effective teachers than others.

Beyond just collecting this type of data, states should ensure that universities use it to improve teacher preparation programs. This will look different at every college, but for starters it could include tightening standards for program entry and exit. Programs should also focus more on clinical training, and universities should dedicate more tuition revenue to teacher preparation

instead of treating the training programs like cash cows to finance other priorities. School districts should carefully collect data on how a program's graduates perform in the classroom. And if, year after year, the data show dismal results for particular teacher preparation programs, then it's fair for the state to shut them down, as U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has said should be done.

But again, as with teachers, getting rid of a few bad programs isn't nearly as important as strengthening the programs that will continue to educate our teachers. With unemployment so high, it may be hard to imagine a time when many more new teachers will be needed, but as baby boomers retire, we'll need new teachers. And for the sake of children, we need people who are ready for the job on Day One.

(c) 2010, Los Angeles Times.

Notice to Students and Faculty Regarding FINAL EXAMINATIONS

A final exam is expected in each credit course at Parkland College. Final exams for all full-semester and second-half-semester courses will be given during final exam week (December 13 - 17) according to the official published schedule. These final exams are not to be given early (during regular class periods). Final exams for all other courses (those ending earlier) will be given at the last regularly scheduled class meeting.

All requests from faculty to alter scheduled final exam times or dates must be reviewed and approved by the Department Chair and the Vice President for Academic Services.

In courses where a final exam is not appropriate, as determined by the Department Chair, an educational alternative scheduled during the week of final exams is expected.

Students: These official College guidelines were established to more fully ensure that you receive the full set of instructional class periods for which you paid and to which you are entitled; and that you have the appropriate amount of time to prepare adequately for your final exams. If your final exam is given earlier than scheduled, please contact the Department Chair or the Vice President for Academic Services (351-2542, Room A117).

Three final exams scheduled on the same day may be considered a conflict. Conflicts may be resolved by arrangement with the faculty of these courses.

Questions or concerns about these guidelines should be directed to the Vice President for Academic Services.

Better than a Gift

Kassandra COAN
Staff Writer

One of the most stressful events at the end of the year can be deciding what gifts to buy for those you care about. It involves figuring out what the person likes, what they already have, and what you can afford. After days or possibly weeks of contemplating and hours of fighting not only traffic, but also crowded stores, you can finally make the purchase. You wrap it up and give it to the person; they open it, tell you thank you, and on occasion the gift might be remembered.

The majority of people I have spoken with say they love holidays, because they bring people together. Why should gifts be any different? The best gift that one can give is a shared experience. Experiences can be more affordable than material items and also more memorable. In addition, it's not just

an experience given, but one you can partake in as well.

One of the most common material gifts is a gift card or cash. These are not only impersonal, but suggest that you did not think about the person until the last minute. For the \$20 spent on a gift card that will soon be forgotten, you could buy a person two tickets for an event, such as ice skating. Ice skating tickets are only \$3 on the U of I campus. During the busy shopping season, you are likely to spend just as much time shopping and waiting in lines as you would spend at a fun event with a loved one.

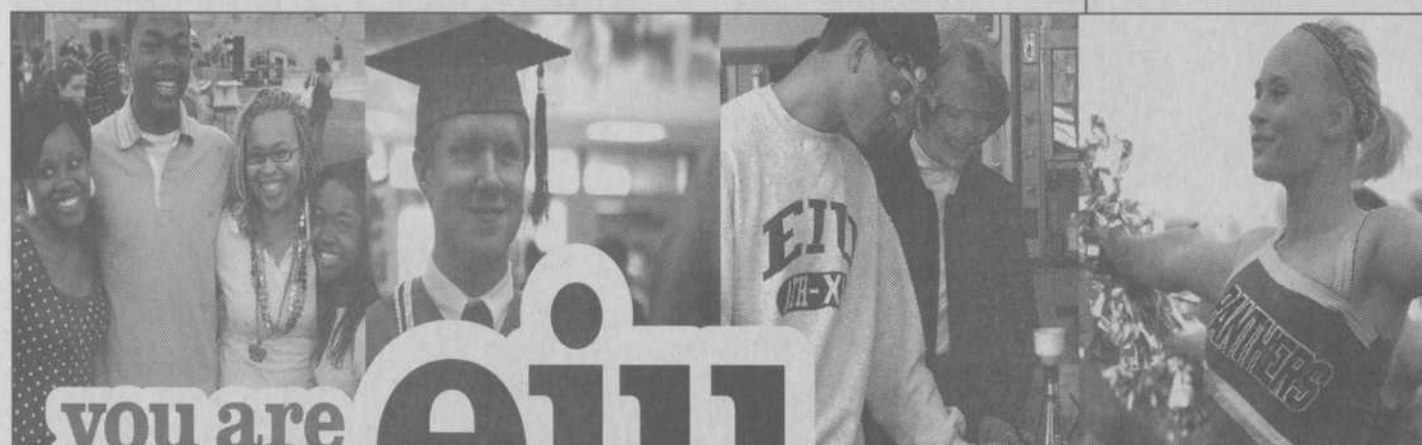
Two years ago, I was given a pair of football tickets for my birthday. It was apparent the person had put a great deal of thought into the gift, because it showed that they knew a football game would be a new experience for me. This present was exceptionally memorable compared to the cards and cash I received, because I was given an opportunity to spend time with someone who cared about me. We were even able to follow up on the present by taking

pictures and creating a collage that will always remind me of the great time we had together.

As a receiver of gifts, you also have the ability to change the common tradition of giving material items. When someone asks you for your wish list, tell him or her of an experience you would like to share with him or her. It doesn't have to be some new or extravagant. Even a trip to the movie theater or to the ice cream parlor could be an event you will both remember for years to come.

There are other unique requests you can have. Jeff Ginger, a student in Urbana, said that he requests people to donate to an organization he likes or finds useful instead of buying him gifts. Sticking to tradition, people often continue giving him material items that aren't really needed.

So, try gifting an experience this holiday season. You will be surprised about how memorable and stress free the occasion can be for not only the person receiving the gift, but you as well!



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Prospectus Advice

Q: Clara asks, "How do I make friends at Parkland?"

A: Clara, making new friends in a foreign setting can prove to be a difficult task. A good way to go about making new friends is to get yourself out there. Approach a classmate during a group project. Be kind and courteous. Hold the door open for someone or offer help to someone who might need it. Also, joining clubs is another great way to meet people. Working together alongside other determined individuals proves to be a great way to form a special bond with people. Best of luck!

Prospectus advice is a weekly advice column. If you have a question you would like to ask, please E-mail prospectusadvice@gmail.com

Just a Little Food for Thought

This editorial content is brought to you by:



David REPLOGLÉ
The Real College Guide

Hey, do you even think about what you're eating? Not chowing down on what's good for you is not only bad for your bod, but your grades could suffer too.

Your whole life you've been spoon-fed information about the importance of good nutrition. (Your first shape? The food pyramid. And you began counting calories before blocks!) Yet in college, eating on a whim is an everyday occurrence. And while you know poor nutrition is not good for your body, what about your brain? Here, we dish out the truth on how smart eating makes you ... well, maybe not smarter, but definitely sharper.

Not-so-smart Eating Habits
Between the slop in dining halls and the abundance of greasy campus restaurants, eating healthfully on campus can be a chore. Staying away from food loaded with saturated fat and (literally) killer trans fats — can be tough when you're addicted to the value menu. Make no mistake: You are what you eat — and the food you consume does, in fact, affect your brain. So you might want to think twice before eating ...

A high-fat diet in an Oxford University study, research-

found a significant decline in the animals' cognitive ability, particularly short-term memory, after just nine days. Dr. Andrew Murray, the lead researcher of the Oxford study, and his team are currently conducting similar research on healthy young men.

Too much University of Wisconsin-Madison research conducted last year by Dr. Dong-

So if your diet can damage your brain, can you eat your way to a better GPA? Well, science seems to support that notion. Look for these main components of a quality diet to nourish the mind and body:

Lean proteins: fish, skinless poultry, lentils, beans, soy products, nuts

Fiber-rich carbohydrates: oats, brown rice, whole-grain

both recommend eating fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, flaxseed, all of which help lower cholesterol, which means a healthier heart ... and brain. So it'd be smart to pop these power foods onto your plate.

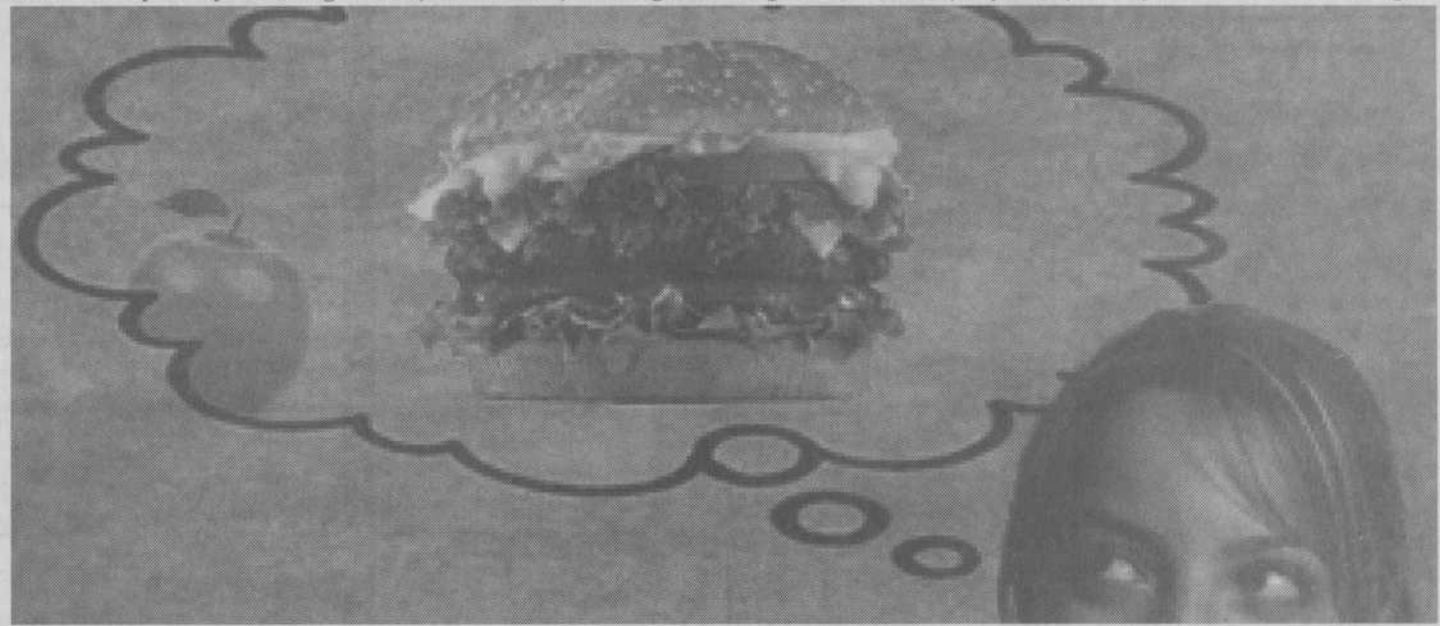
bedtime — a piece of cheese, an apple with almond butter, a handful of nuts or whole-milk yogurt (with minimal sugar) —, you tend to sleep through the night, no problem. Sleep is paramount to good health. If you want to lose weight? Sleep more. Do better in class? Sleep more. Feel more energized and look great? Sleep more." Lyon also stresses the impor-

Four years ago, Gregory W. Phillips, who holds a doctorate in biology and teaches at Blinn College, in Schulenburg, Texas, published a study titled "Does Eating Breakfast Affect the Performance of College Students on Biology Exams?" in *Bioscience: Journal of College Biology Teaching*. Indeed, Phillips found that nearly three-quarters of participants who passed had eaten breakfast. Of the students who did not eat in the a.m.? Only half passed the exam. When breaking it down into letter grades, the most A's and B's belonged to students who ate breakfast, and non-breakfast eaters scored the most C's and D's.

The study "provides a platform from which to strongly encourage college students to eat breakfast as a method of augmenting their study strategies," says Phillips. "While eating breakfast can't ensure students will pass the exam, this research does suggest that eating breakfast provides students with an advantage."

But what you eat matters too. A good mix of those aforementioned complex carbohydrates and proteins is the ultimate breakfast to balance the chemicals in your brain and allow for enhanced learning. Breakfasts high only in carbs or protein, as well as those chock-full of sugar (cut the Frosted Flakes and French toast), throw off this balance and usually result in sluggishness and inattentiveness. Some good suggestions for breakfast time are complex carbs like oatmeal and whole-grain toast; proteins like scrambled eggs, peanut butter and almonds; and fruits like blueberries and sliced apples.

During his years as a health sciences major at James Madison University, in Harrisonburg, Va., Lyon would have the same meal every morning before an exam: "A bowl of oatmeal with sliced banana, frozen blueberries, toasted pecans and a light drizzle of real maple syrup. It was always just the right amount."



sheng Cai, a professor of physiology, and his colleagues found that overeating causes the brain to react as if the food were a pathogen, resulting in an immune response that might cause brain deficits.

High-cal, high-sugar foods
The National Institutes of Health just forked over more than \$5 million in funding for Drs. Kevin Niswender and Aurelio Galli, professors at the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, to research how high-fat, high-sugar, high-calorie foods disrupt brain signals that involve mood and behavior.

Fruits and vegetables: leafy greens (the darker the better), broccoli, blueberries, raspberries, tomatoes

Low-fat dairy products: skim milk, yogurt, cottage cheese

Select oils: extra-virgin olive oil, grape seed oil

Begin by keeping good-for-you food around. "When I was attending my university, I always had some apples, oranges, walnuts, a jar of natural peanut butter and some yogurt on hand," says Nathan Lyon, organic chef, public health expert and host of "A Lyon in the Kitchen" on Discovery Health. "These foods not only had some element of nutrition but were also satiating, thus making me less prone to walk down the street to suck down a box of chocolate-chip cookies with a doughnut chaser."

Certain foods are classified by nutritionists as "brain foods," and fatty fish seems to lead the pack. The American Dietetic Association and American Heart Association

walnuts and flaxseed, all of which help lower cholesterol, which means a healthier heart ... and brain. So it'd be smart to pop these power foods onto your plate.

Snacks to Help You Sleep Yourself Smart

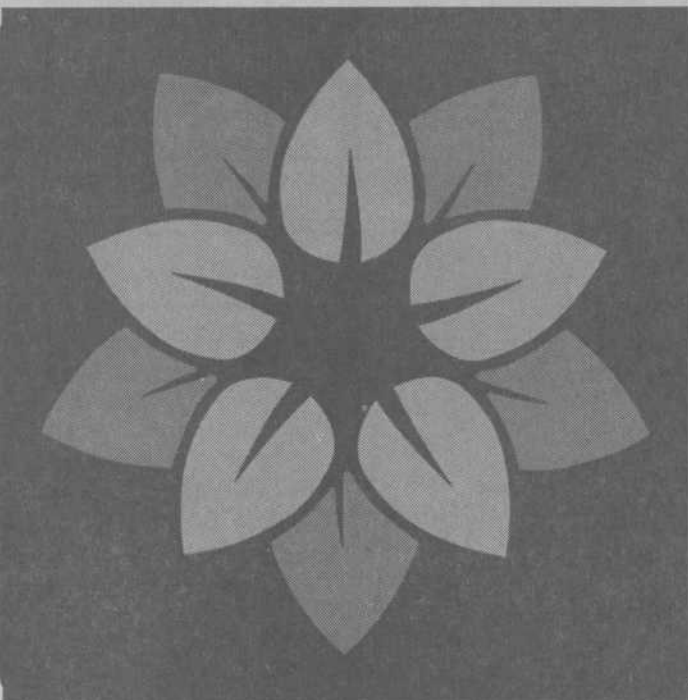
Yes, we know you love your doughnuts. But foods high in simple carbs (what some people refer to as the "evil whites": white bread, white rice, non-whole-grain pasta) are also high on what's known as the glycemic index. White carbs, especially when loaded with sugar, cause major ups and downs in blood sugar that can interfere with a good night's sleep and disrupt concentration.

"Let's say the night before an exam you consume a big bowl of pasta for dinner," says Lyon. "What happens is you will eventually get hypoglycemic due to your blood sugar response via the simple carbs, which then results in a terrible night's sleep." Instead of pasta before bed, reach for some fat. "By eating some kind of fat at

tance of knowing which fats are good for you (the fats that come from fatty fish and nuts are the healthy kind: polyunsaturated), as well as the difference between complex and simple carbohydrates. "The thing about carbs and fat is that people make them out to be bad," says Lyons. "But if you are eating whole grains, like a barley risotto paired with roasted winter squash, braised kale, a shaving of Parmesano Romano and a good drizzle of olive oil to finish? Then that's different. Barley is a complex carb. So is oatmeal, brown rice and root vegetables. Olive oil is a good fat. But if you are sucking down pizza six nights a week, well then, those simple carbs are not so good."

Sleeping Breakfast Is Stupid
OK, let's say you're sleeping more. So you wake up late and have to get to class — no time for breakfast. Turn out, this first meal of the day is crucial. Researchers have long found that eating breakfast is linked to higher test scores and better overall school performance.

Prospectus Pick: Tumblr



Jake GODIN
Staff Writer

Like it or not, we are in an age dominated by the use of computers. The younger generation seems to pick up their use of technology with ease, while those with a few more years under their belt seem to struggle at times. But there's something that may remain a little confusing to all of us, whether you're a computer savvy youngster or a wizened adult and that is the world of blogging.

When taking a look at tumblr.com things seem to get a bit easier. Instead of having to mess with templates, widgets and gadgets, or any sort of coding, you are simply presented with an easy registration process and are then free to post anything to your heart's content. Video, music, photos, conversations, quotes, and just plain old text. If you have it on your computer somewhere, you can post it onto Tumblr effortlessly. If, however, one wants to explore the realms of

customization for their blog, Tumblr has that, too.

There is a lot of opportunity to interact with others through Tumblr by means that aren't exactly common with other blogging platforms. For instance, if you notice an entertaining photo that someone put up on their blog and got a kick out of it, you can let them know by "liking" it or reblogging it. In turn, they can then see this and figure out how popular their postings are.

The whole idea of Tumblr is to be easy to use. The site was designed with the intention of using as little effort as possible to communicate one's ramblings and daily lives to a community of people with the same interests. You may be able to customize your blog better and integrate more functionality into the higher tech blog platforms, but if you're looking to simply express what you want in an easy format then Tumblr is the blog site for you.

www.eiu.edu/~adulterd



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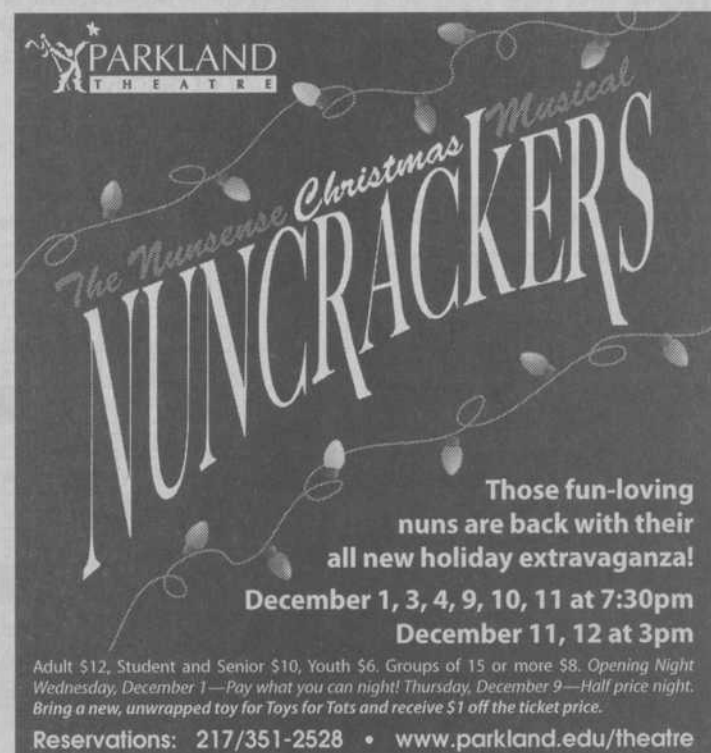


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Officer Matthew Kopmann



Vehicle Burglary

People get very upset when their vehicle is burglarized, but are they taking the precautions to keep their items safe? While on campus there are many precautions that should be taken.

Always lock your vehicle and remove valuable items from your car. MP3 players, GPS units, stereo systems, and other items attract break-ins. If you are unable to remove the items from your vehicle keep them hidden in the glove box, console, or trunk. Keep your vehicle's windows up because thieves may have tools to open your car through small openings.

Do not approach anyone attempting to burglarize you vehicle. If your vehicle has been broken into, contact the police immediately.

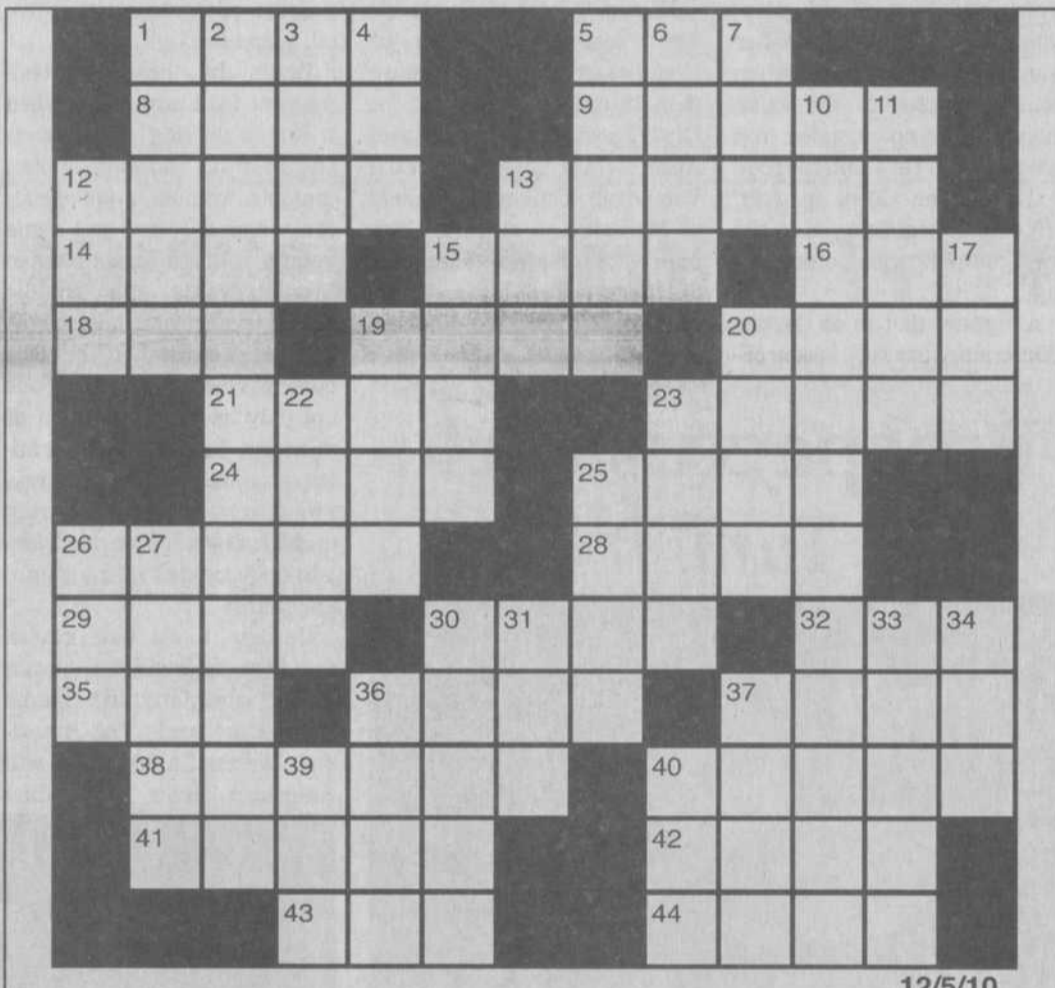


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ACROSS

- 1 ___ Baldwin of "Chuck"
- 5 "The ___ Bang Theory"
- 8 Get hot under the collar
- 9 "The ___"; John Wayne movie
- 12 Permissible
- 13 "Enter the ___"; Bruce Lee film
- 14 Annoys
- 15 Lead role on "Boy Meets World"
- 16 "___ Hard"; Bruce Willis movie
- 18 Actress Susan of "L.A. Law"
- 19 Actor Danza
- 20 Cat's cry
- 21 Poet ___ Angelou
- 23 Judy ___ of "Laugh-In"
- 24 Bee, to Sheriff Andy Taylor
- 25 Dean of "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman"
- 26 Actor Eriq La ___
- 28 "Two and a ___ Men"
- 29 ___-mannered; easygoing
- 30 Give the cold shoulder to
- 32 Cry of discovery
- 35 Ms. Thurman
- 36 Throat-clearing sound
- 37 Mosque leader

- 38 Arnold Schwarzenegger movie
- 40 Small decorative mat under a vase or figurine
- 41 Dog's name on "Frasier"
- 42 "___ all come out in the wash"
- 43 Rather or Aykroyd
- 44 "___ of Our Lives"

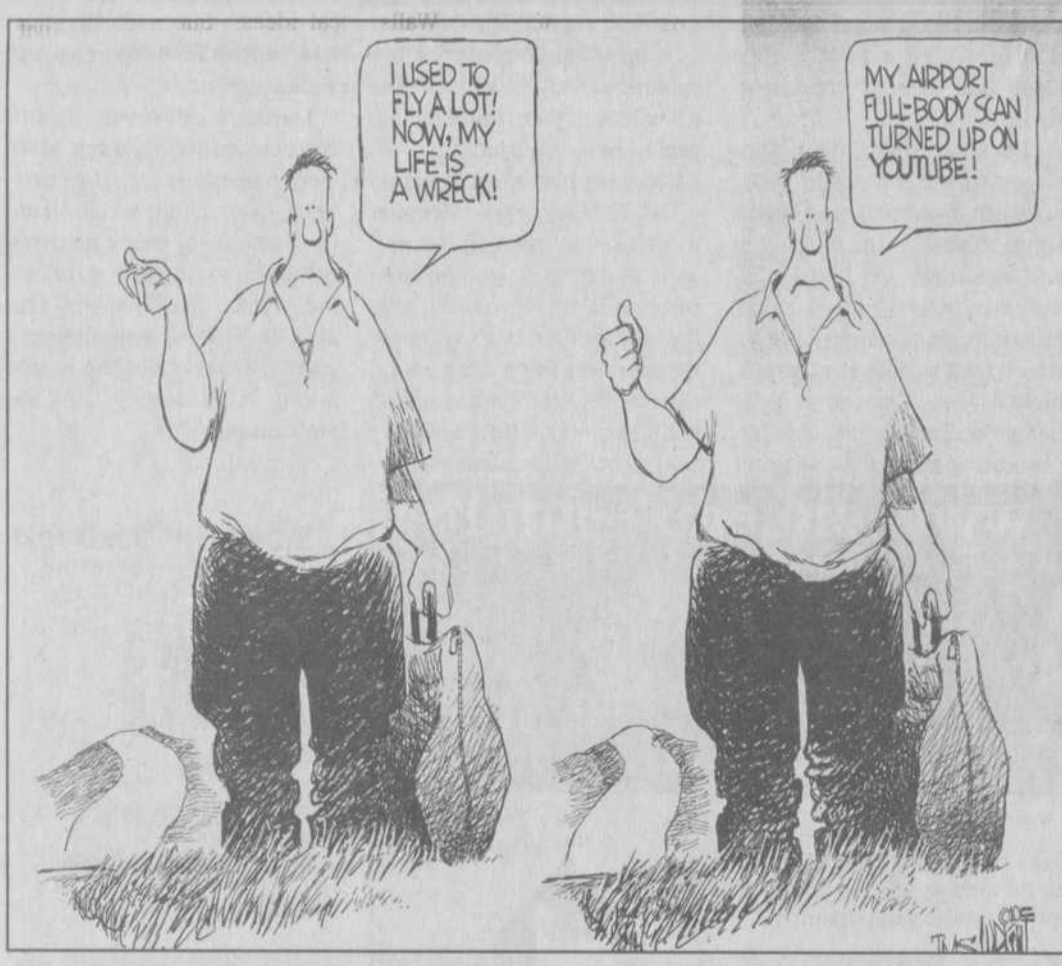
DOWN

- 1 "Hearts ___"; John Ritter/Markie Post sitcom
- 2 David McCallum's role on "NCIS"
- 3 Actress Suzy ___
- 4 "How I ___ Your Mother"
- 5 Singer/songwriter ___ Manilow
- 6 "Now ___ me down to sleep..."
- 7 Choke
- 10 Sitcom for Ed O'Neill and Julie Bowen
- 11 "The ___ Movie"; film for Len Cariou
- 12 Tupperware bowl cover
- 13 Knotts of "The Andy Griffith Show"
- 15 Outer garment
- 17 Female sheep
- 19 Actress ___ Daly
- 20 ___ carrier; postal employee
- 22 "___ Lang Syne"
- 23 Scott ___ of "Hawaii Five-0"
- 25 Buddy
- 26 University in Dallas, for short
- 27 ___ Teegarden of "Friday Night Lights"
- 30 Martin or Charlie
- 31 "Death Becomes ___"; Meryl Streep/Bruce Willis movie
- 33 Monty and Arsenio
- 34 Matt's wife on "Little People, Big World"
- 36 Largest continent
- 37 Tiny amount
- 39 Combine two numbers
- 40 ___ away with; abolished

Solution to Last Week's Puzzle

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In this league, 'mediocre' is the new 'good'

Sam FARMER
Los Angeles Times

Pull up the NFL standings, take a look at the NFC West, and feel free to scratch your head.

What the L is going on?

The Seattle Seahawks and St. Louis Rams are both 5-6. They're also the leaders in the NFC West, a division moving backward so quickly it should be beeping. On Sunday, the Rams stepped forward by winning at Denver, and the Seahawks stepped back with a home loss to Kansas City.

The mild, mild West is a microcosm of a league where mediocrity reigns, where the middle of the road is as busy as a Thanksgiving traffic jam - the bad teams getting better, and the good teams getting worse.

The league calls that competitive balance, and it makes every weekend a crapshoot. That was the case Sunday, when eight of the 11 day games were decided by a touchdown or less.

The two-win Buffalo Bills showed a strong heartbeat, coming oh-so-close to beating the first-place Pittsburgh Steelers in overtime. Instead, after Bills receiver Stevie Johnson let a soft, 40-yard touchdown pass slip through his hands - his fifth drop of the game - the Steelers responded with a field

goal to win, 19-16.

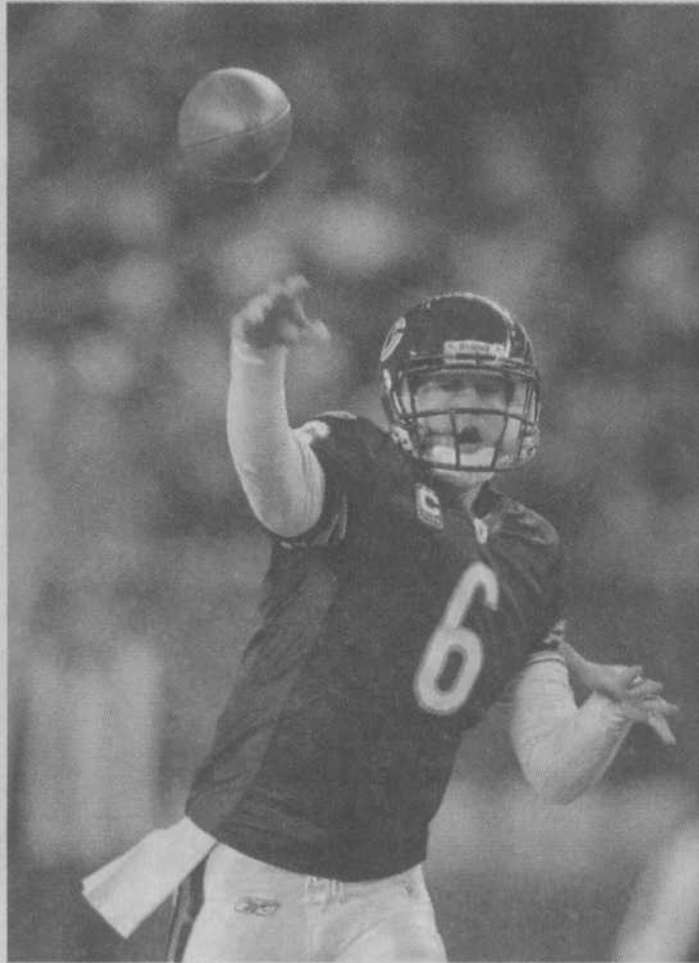
"I had the game in my hands and I dropped it," Johnson said. "Humbled. Humbled." Johnson had a lot more to say on his Twitter account after the game, blaming the drop on the man upstairs. Go look for yourself.

The Carolina Panthers have been humbled all season, cycling through quarterbacks and winning just one game. But they nearly reversed their fortunes for a day, giving the surging Browns a scare in Cleveland before losing, 24-23. The Panthers, with rookie quarterback Jimmy Clausen at the helm, came within inches of victory - John Kasay's 42-yard field-goal attempt on the final play grazed the outside of the left upright.

Kasay missed, but Atlanta's Matt Bryant didn't. He made a 47-yard field goal with nine seconds left to lift the Falcons to a 20-17 victory over Green Bay at the Georgia Dome.

In what was billed as a possible preview of the NFC championship game, the Falcons (9-2) showed again that they are devastatingly efficient at home, where they are 19-1 with Matt Ryan at quarterback. Four of Atlanta's final six games are against losing teams, including two against the 1-10 Panthers.

Then again, records can be deceiving. Just look at the Chi-



Could Jay Cutler and the Chicago Bears be on their way to the top of the NFC?

Yong Kim/Philadelphia Daily News/MCT

cago Bears. Yes, they came into Week 12 at 7-3 and on a roll, but their four previous victories were against teams that were a combined 11-29. How good could the Bears really be? They showed the football

world Sunday, knocking off Michael Vick and the torrid Philadelphia Eagles, 31-26, with a four-touchdown, zero-interception performance by Jay Cutler.

It was the first Eagles loss in

a game in which Vick was the quarterback throughout, and the first time Vick had an interception since Christmas Eve of 2006. What's more, it was a reminder that there might not be a clear-cut favorite in the NFC all season.

FEELING PUNCHY

Most weeks it's a helmet-to-helmet hit that has everyone buzzing. But in Sunday's incident, neither player was wearing a helmet.

Houston receiver Andre Johnson and Tennessee cornerback Cortland Finnegan were ejected after ripping off each other's helmets and brawling, the culmination of tensions that were brewing all game.

"He kept doing little things and I told him: 'Just because you're frustrated, you need to stop what you're doing,'" Johnson said. "I guess he thought it was funny."

The normally soft-spoken Johnson conceded: "I lost my cool."

Finnegan did not speak to reporters after the game, but Titans Coach Jeff Fisher, co-chairman of the competition committee, said the incident "is not good for the game."

CANTON-ESQUE

Cleveland's Peyton Hillis rushed for three touchdowns against the Panthers, pushing his season total to 11. That puts him in some lofty company - the only other Cleveland backs

to run for that many in a season are Jim Brown and Leroy Kelly, both Hall of Fame members.

"That's absurd," Hillis told reporters after being informed of his place in team history. "Those guys are legends and I'm a nobody."

CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

The Dallas Cowboys changed coaches, then won their next two games.

The Minnesota Vikings are hoping they can do the same - and they're halfway there. In beating Washington on Sunday, the Vikings won their first game under interim Coach Leslie Frazier.

From the sound of things, Frazier already has something former coach Brad Childress did not: Command of the locker room.

"He's well-respected. It felt like when he talks, guys' ears are pinned up; they listen to everything that's coming out of his mouth," running back Adrian Peterson said of the promoted defensive coordinator. "It's just a feeling that I really can't explain, a feeling of just being sure about the words that are coming out of his mouth and trusting them."

(c) 2010, Los Angeles Times.

Dr. Gina Walls recognized for teaching excellence

Josh GRUBE
Staff Writer

Dr. Gina Walls, professor of sociology at Parkland College, recently won the 2011 Teaching Excellence Award from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, (NISOD). The annual award is given to a hardworking and well-deserving instructor who portrays dedication to the knowledge of their students.

With the award comes \$1000 for professional development funds and a trip to the NISOD conference at Austin, Texas in May to be recognized among other recipients. "The recognition of the effort is going to be very nice," said Walls.

Walls first arrived at Parkland as a student. She attended in 1975, after deciding against going into engineering at the University of Illinois. "Parkland was a really good place for me. I spent some time in the advertising curriculum, and sold advertising space for the Prospectus," Walls explained. "Essentially, I decided that advertising wasn't quite as interesting to me as the reason why people would be moved to buy things from advertising. That then led me to sociology." Walls went on from Parkland to earn a Bachelor's of Sociology at the University of Illinois.

However, just over a decade later, in 1986, Walls came back to Parkland as the college's first Admissions Representative. "I worked to try to promote Parkland to high school students and returning adults in the community. I did a lot of things: I visited high schools, I was at the county fair with the Parkland booth, things like that," Walls said. "After applying, I actually didn't get called in the first round. So I went to the personal director and said, 'If you hire anyone else for this job, it will be the wrong person.'" Throughout working with the faculty, she became increasingly interested in the idea of teaching.

"I always loved being a student, so maybe I would love being a teacher," Walls said. "K-12 teaching had never appealed to me, but I got to thinking that



Parkland College professor of sociology Dr. Gina D. Walls recently won the 2011 National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development's Teaching Excellence Award for Parkland College.

Levi NORMAN/Prospectus

I'd never really thought about teaching at a community college." This led her back to the University of Illinois to finish a Masters Degree. In 1988 she began teaching part-time for Parkland while still an Admissions Representative.

It wasn't until Walls developed her own course in 1992 that she would start teaching full time at Parkland. "I was talking to Fred Johnson, the chair of the Social Science and Human Services department at that time, about how a lot of the students I was talking to said that they needed some sort of class that would help them do educational planning, personal development work, and kind of figure out how to make college work for them. Through those conversations with Fred and talking with others around campus, we designed an Orientation To College course, called ORN 101. We still have the course, but now it's called PSY 109," Walls explained. "Once we got that course designed, Parkland hired me to teach it, as well as some Sociology classes, as a faculty member in an adjunct position for a year." The success of this arrangement led her to become a full-time pro-

fessor in 1993.

Walls quickly discovered that loved teaching. "I kind of knew after that first night, I mean I was really nervous about stepping into the classroom, but I really felt like that was the right place for me. I also really felt like a community college was the right place for me," Walls said. "One of the things I like about it is that the emphasis is on teaching and yet Parkland is very supportive of innovative ideas. The Orientation to College course was an idea we hadn't tried before, but I got a lot of support from administration at Parkland and faculty at Parkland to give the course a try."

Through designing the Orientation to College course, Walls realized a few gaps in her knowledge that could be filled. This once again brought her back to the University of Illinois, to take classes in career development, counseling, and student development. Eventually, she earned a PhD in Educational Psychology.

Orientation to College is not the only course Walls has developed since she started at Parkland. She has also created Gender and Society (SOC 240) and Industrial and Orga-

Psychology (PSY 220), and Marriage and Family (SOC 200).

As well as teaching, Walls is also the chair of the Academic Assessment Committee. "We help faculty design ways to evaluate student learning and understand how their programs and classes are working beyond grading assignments. The academic assessment effort is designed to be useful to the faculty member. Our creditors and funders are also interested in that kind of documentation. It's documentation in student learning in a different way than just classroom assignments. That's been interesting and it's my biggest responsibility right now."

Walls describes her teaching method as ever evolving. "In the years that I've been teaching I've moved away from the lecture format. That's kind of the easiest thing for us to do in many ways, but I've often wondered whether or not it's an effective way for students to learn," Walls explained. "I have been trying over the years to do things that make the student work harder while they're in class. To make them engaged with the class material. I do class assignments, short activities followed by class discussion, and activities that make the students apply what they're learning about. In SOC 101 particularly, I want the students, rather than memorizing facts, I want them to learn to think sociologically. To think

about their lives in a broader context of the social world and to understand those sociological ideas." She explains that in deviating from the lecture method, she can also appeal to a wider variety of learning styles, as well as help students develop some comfort with different learning approaches.

Outside of the classroom, Walls enjoys riding and taking care of her horses. "When I was almost 40 I decided that I always wanted to ride horses, so that's what I do when I'm not teaching," Walls said. "I have three horses, and I am always working on taking riding lessons. I'm enjoying that very much. Between my job and that hobby that takes up most of my time. They're a lot of work, but they're also a lot of fun."

Walls would like to stress that she truly does love teaching. If you are a student interested or currently pursuing the field of sociology, Parkland is definitely the right place to be.

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GIVE THE GIFT OF TECH

The perfect holiday gifts for the gadget lover in your life

By GREGG ELLMAN
McClatchy-Tribune Information Services

The latest and greatest in the technology world exists for just a few days.

Capturing that elusive “must-have thing of the moment” for the tech geeks on your shopping list can be quite a challenge, and horror of horrors if you end up giving someone last year’s iPod.

To help you in your tech quest, we’ve compiled a list of what’s out there for this holiday season. Happy shopping!

ROCK OUT

Headphones make a great gift and iFrogz has a few reasonably priced additions.

The DJ-style headphones, named the Ronin and Mogul headphones, are for anyone wanting comfortable over-the-ear fit without having to spend your entire holiday budget.

Both models work with any electronic gadget having a 3.5mm headphone jack.

They feature adjustable over-the-ear style cushioned speakers, good to wear over a long period of time, and both fold up for storage.

The Moguls (\$69.99) feature AeroFoam cushions, which help keep out unwanted noise and give you great sound from speakers featuring 50mm drivers producing good sound with a good amount of bass.

They are available in black, magenta, sky blue and white.

The lesser-priced Ronins (\$49.99) have standard cushioned padding and are available in black, blue, red and white. They have the 50mm drivers to deliver clear sound in comfort.

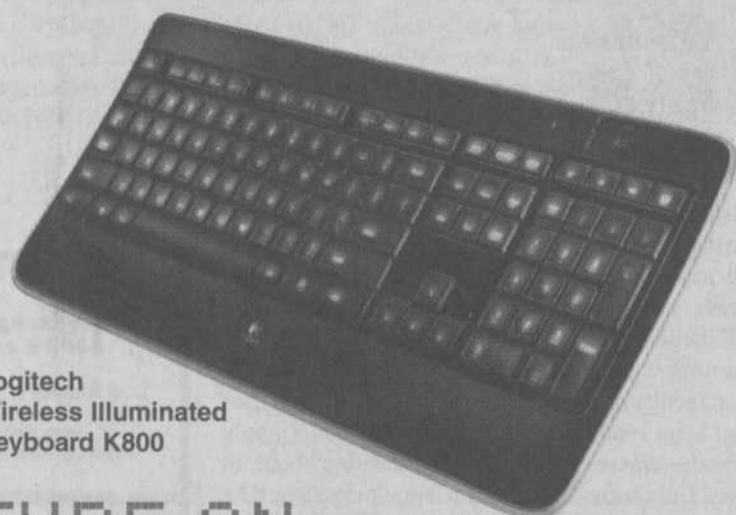
<http://ifrogz.com>



iFrogz Moguls



iFrogz Ronins



Logitech Wireless Illuminated Keyboard K800

TYPE ON

Logitech’s Wireless Illuminated Keyboard K800 is a full-sized option for any Mac or PC user working day or night.

What makes it stand out from other keyboards is its ambient light and motion sensors.

The sensors detect how much light is in the room and the motion sensors work well to detect when your hands are on the keys, turning the backlighting on and off as needed. Thus the keys are backlit with the correct amount of light for viewing, regardless of how much light is in the room.

The rechargeable wireless keyboard can enjoy longer battery life because of this, up to 10 days before needed a charge.

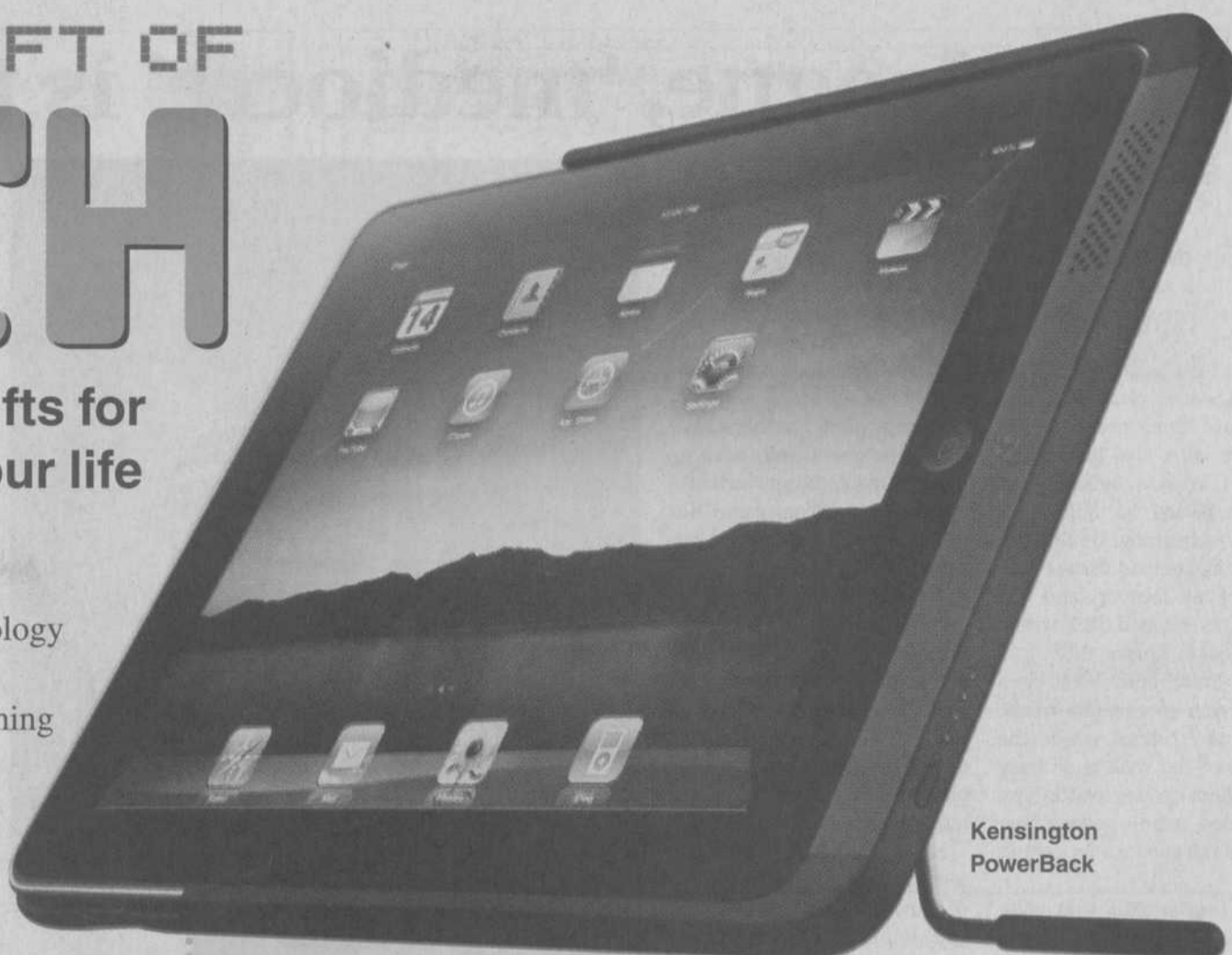
Charging is done with a micro-USB connection, and it doesn’t matter if the keyboard is in use while recharging the built-in AA NiMH batteries.

Typing with the keyboard is very comfortable due to the Logitech PerfectStroke technology and key system. Users type, as Logitech describes it, in a “stroke comfortable, fluid and whisper-quiet” manner.

The full-sized keyboard includes a number keypad on the right, the standard F1 through F12 keys, volume controls and more.

A connection to your computer is made with a small 2.4 GHz wireless USB connection, which can stay in the USB port and also will control a Logitech wireless mouse.

www.logitech.com, \$99.99



Kensington PowerBack

KICK IT

One of the hottest items on the market continues to be Apple’s iPad, and there is no shortage of accessories for them.

Kensington has what I think is the best — the PowerBack (\$129.99) battery case with kickstand and dock, which has gotten the official Apple stamp of approval.

With a portable device like the iPad, power is critical and portable power is often necessary. This case gives you both and more.

The iPads have great battery power, but often it’s not enough and the PowerBack is a great choice.

In addition to the added power, you get a hard-shell case for protection and a built-in kickstand for hands-free use.

The kickstand opens to a 65-degree angle, allowing for a separate keyboard (not included) and landscape or portrait viewing.

To attach, slide your iPad in; it snaps together in seconds to protect your expensive device from scratches and other environment hazards.

A micro-USB cable is included for charging the PowerBack 4200mAh battery, which should give your iPad about five additional hours of life.

To find out how much power is left in the extra battery, an indicator has four lights to display with a push of a button.

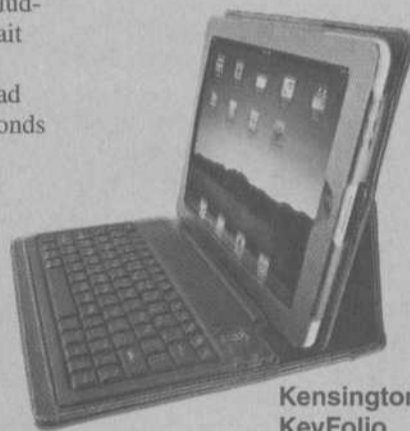
If additional power isn’t needed, Kensington KeyFolio Bluetooth Keyboard and Case for iPad (\$99.99) falls in the functional and well-built category.

The synthetic leather case stores your iPad and has wireless Bluetooth keyboard with rubberized keys built into the device.

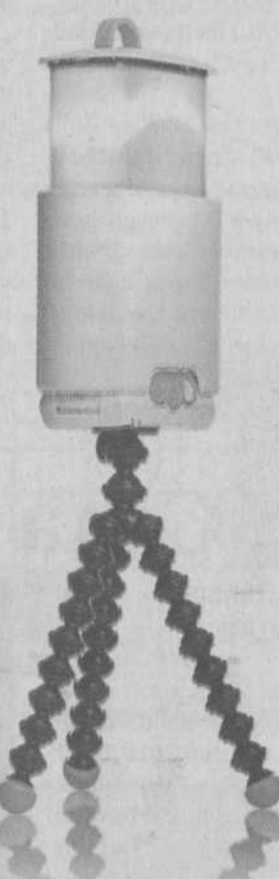
The keyboard is also charged with a micro-USB connection and has rubber keys to ensure that they won’t scratch the device when not in use.

Both the PowerBack and the KeyFolio give users full access to the iPad when attached including the 30-pin connection for charging and syncing.

<http://us.kensington.com>



Kensington KeyFolio



Joby Gorillatorch Switchback

LIGHT UP

Joby’s Gorillatorch Switchback is a new addition from the company known for the Gorillapod line of tripods for cameras and iPods or iPhones.

The light comes in a kit with the tripod to attach an LED lantern-headlamp in any environment where extra portable lighting is needed.

Six light modes are available along with an adjustable dimmer switch to control five powerful LEDs projected with a 92 percent ultra-efficient holographic lens.

How much it lights depends on your environment, but Joby states it is capable of illuminating an 8-person family tent or small cabin.

With the famous Gorillapod tripod included, attaching it to most anything is simple.

The flexible tripod legs can stand upright on any flat surface, attach to a pole, doorknob or most anything it can wrap around.

The versatility doesn’t end there; a woven headband is included to take the light off the tripod to wear while hiking, trolling around an attic or just trying to get more light just where it’s needed.

Using the headband, it will light up to 60 feet ahead.

In addition you get two white LEDs for flood lighting and two red LEDs to preserve night vision on headband.

<http://joby.com>, \$59.99

WAKE UP

The XtremeMac Luna SST joins the crowded field of AC powered docking nightstand alarm systems, but manages to set itself apart.

What makes it stand out is that the unit splits into two pieces; one can stand by itself on another nightstand. This is handy since the Luna features dual-alarm capabilities with full stereo sound.

The clock is easy to view on the large LED backlit face with orange numbers, which adjusts from bright to dim.

Alarm controls and the ever-important snooze for the dual alarms are well-placed on both the main unit and the detachable speaker.

Users can dock an iPod touch or iPhone for the audio and video content as well as

charging. Anything on these devices can be played to wake up, as well as FM radio chimes.

There’s also an XtremeMac Alarm Clock App to create a customized wakeup. This lets users choose what they want to wake up to (music, sounds, etc.) and set the snooze times.

The Luna SST sounds great as a sound system. The included wireless remote is helpful to change the sound settings (bass and treble), your choice of tunes and the volume.

www.XtremeMac.com, \$129.99

Xtreme Mac Luna SST

