



Prospectus News

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Wednesday, February 25, 2009

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Slow Internet? Maybe you're part of the problem

By PATRICK WOOD
Assistant Editor

You're sitting at Parkland College waiting for one of your classes to start. Suddenly you realize you need to turn in an assignment for an online class. You break out your trusty laptop, power it up, and make your way to the ANGEL homepage. Then you wait. The site takes forever to load or keeps timing out. Finally you slam your laptop closed in frustration and head to class. Has anything like this ever happened to you? If so, before you blame the Internet service, or the ANGEL online system, maybe you should take some time to try to understand how both of them work.

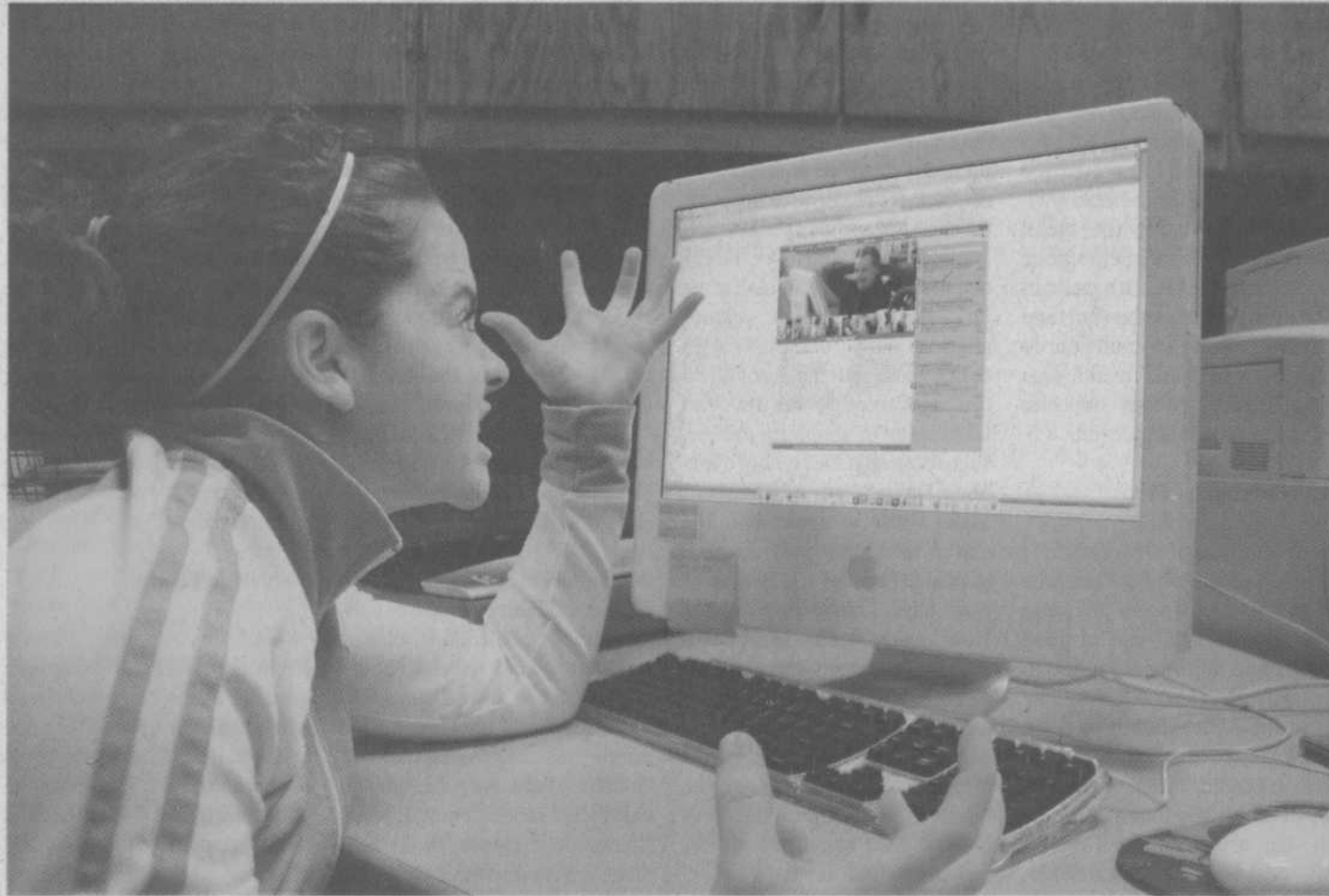
Doug Brooks is the associate director of Campus Technology at Parkland College. He explains more about Parkland's internet connection.

"Now I don't handle ANGEL, but as far as the Internet part, we (Parkland) have a 30MB connection, which is fairly large connection," he said.

According to Brooks, the cause for slow Internet connections is usually caused by the rapid consumption of bandwidth. Bandwidth is a measure of how much information is sent between one computer and another or one computer and a server. Think of bandwidth as an interstate highway. The more traffic on that highway, the harder it is to get from point A to point B.

"The main bandwidth hog is streaming video," said Brooks.

A perfect example of streaming video is the popular site YouTube. And although stream-



ing video is guilty of causing sluggish internet, it's not the only culprit. Flash games, games that are played on an online server and online music players also slow connectivity down considerably.

When the bandwidth is flooded with people using these types of Web sites, you're more likely to experience slow download times, slow buffering times, and choppy video viewing. ANGEL is also affected according to Brooks.

"When the bandwidth is saturated, ANGEL will suffer as well. If the Internet is lagging, so will ANGEL because it is also a Web site," he said.

When asked how students could better connect to and use Parkland's Internet, Brooks explained that the busiest usage hours are between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., so any time before or after those would obviously be a better time to surf the Web. He also emphasized that there are constantly more and more people using the internet, and as Parkland's student body grows larger, so will the amount of people sharing space on the Internet.

Coupled with the sometimes slow internet connection at Parkland is the frustration that many students have with ANGEL. ANGEL is a site that

connects students and teachers at Parkland College. It hosts online classes, student/teacher chat sessions, discussion posts, and shows grades, schedules, and class assignments. Students however have sometimes found ANGEL to be confusing and hard to use.

"I've taken quizzes or tests (on ANGEL) where it just refreshes the page before I'm finished," said sophomore Amanda Clinton. "Sometimes it feels a little crowded. I have two online classes and the layouts feel sloppy, and sometimes it's just really hard to figure out." "I've had constant problems

uploading papers and posting discussions," said Lisa Schleaf, also a sophomore.

Brett Coup, the director of Distance and Virtual Learning offered some insight on why this may be happening.

"The amount of Internet usage at Parkland has increased dramatically just over the last couple of years, and especially since you can bring your laptop out and connect wirelessly. So the number of people that do that and that connect, and the number of faculty that use ANGEL or something else like that in their off-campus classes has a few years, Dating back a few years,

the college had 18MB per second. That was the speed of the internet connection and we were maxing that out, just hitting the ceiling, and I'm sure everyone noticed that last year when it was really just dead in the water. There was just so much traffic trying to come in and out, and so at the end of last semester, the connection was increased to 30MB per second, which helped," said Coup.

Although there is no way to restrict students from watching the latest episode of "Family Guy" on YouTube while simultaneously taking up bandwidth, Parkland does try to give Web sites like the ANGEL homepage priority over everything else.

"The other thing that's happening is that Campus Technologies has bought something called a packet shaper. What that does is limit the amount of traffic coming from video sites, or YouTube, or Facebook and leaves the priority for ANGEL and other academic things. So as long as we're not hitting the limit, you can go surf and do whatever you want. But people who are trying to watch a video or do something online outside of class are going to get a worse performance than people using ANGEL while in class."

A lesser-known fact is that ANGEL is based in Indiana, and operates off campus, which according to Coup, isn't an uncommon practice.

"A lot of colleges now will outsource the hosting of their system because say, five years ago, we used to have some online classes, it was kind of new, and people that did it had

See **Angel** on page 3

New coaches bring worldly, and world-class, experience

■ Volleyball, women's soccer get great boost in leadership

By SEAN HERMANN
Staff Writer

There may be two new coaches at Parkland, but don't plan on any drop in the success of the teams they are coaching—a trait that is sometimes endemic to "new coach syndrome."

Parkland's volleyball and women's soccer teams have a couple of iron horses in their midst, which should prove for an interesting season. Coaches Josh Alford and Vern Podlewski have recently been hired as the new head coaches of their respected sports, Alford as the coach of the women's soccer crew and Podlewski as the coach of the volleyball team. Both coaches plan on continuing on the teams' success from last year and having a positive impact on the team.

Former Assistant Volleyball Coach Vern Podlewski will take over the program after just one year on the Cobra staff. Podlewski arrived at Parkland after completing his professional volleyball career in Germany. He was the starting libero for teams in Germany and Romania from 2005 to 2008 following a three-year term with the USA National Men's Volleyball team and was the alternate libero—a specialized defensive player—for the 2004 USA Olympic team. Prior to his national experience, he spent two years at the University of Hawaii where his team won the NCAA Championship in 2002 and was selected as a 2nd team All-American.

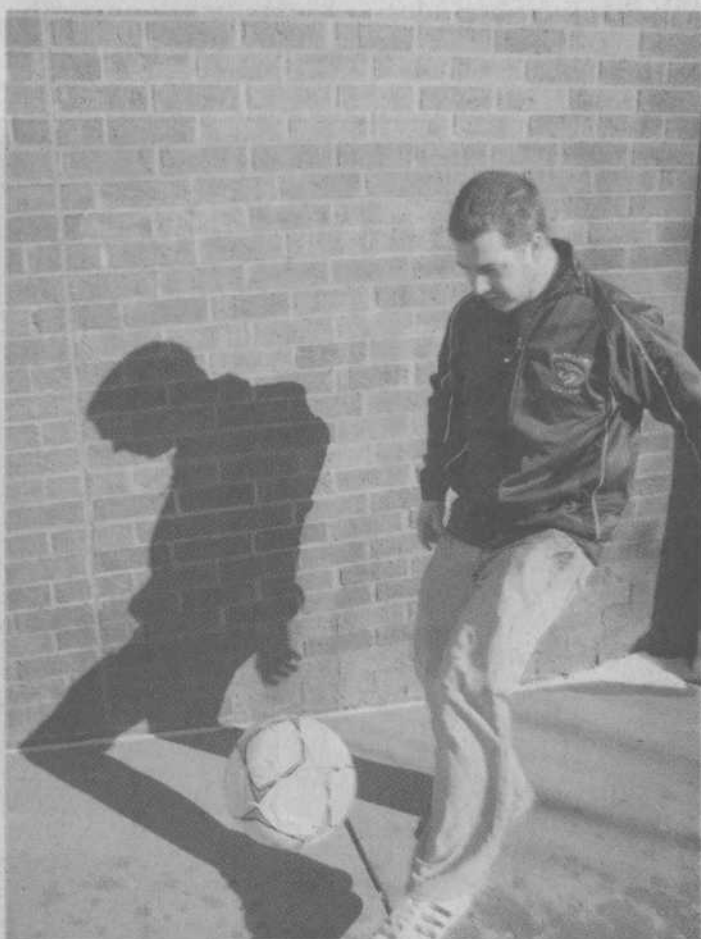
Podlewski plans on focusing

on next season's "team chemistry." His initial task is to probe his team's strengths and weaknesses before focusing on specifics.

"The chemistry will develop

bringing insight to the team. He predicts that the team will win, conference again and be serious contenders on a national level.

"We are younger this year,



The women's soccer team has new leadership with arrival of Josh Alford.

Sean Hermann/Prospectus

over time," said Podlewski. "The players need to work with each other and rely on each other."

Podlewski hopes to "make a competitive but fun environment for the team," while sharing his pro experience and

but eager and ready to play," said Podlewski. "This year will be a year of desire."

Athletic Director Rod Lovett had many important areas to factor in his replacement of Mike Trame, who left a large

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Theatre Review: Flight of the Lawnchair Man

By NADA YOUSSEF
Staff Writer

fly high. In the first scene, Jerry sings about how depressed he is and how he doesn't know what he is for, for all the while trying to hang himself.

Suddenly, the love of his life, Gracie, appears to him in an illusion, and convinces him not to hang himself. He starts thinking about who Jerry Gorman really is, what he is meant for. Then, he comes up with the idea of flying.

to tell left from right; he could just float up in space! Little does Jerry know that a monstrous scandal awaits him that will hinder him from pursuing his "Up with People NASA Space Program."

Finally, Jerry and Gracie come up with the idea to tie 400 helium balloons to his lawn chair so that Jerry can fly.

This musical comedy is about Jerry Gorman's voyage



Anthony Burkert/Prospectus

cesses.

This creative musical comedy is set in a nice, suburban neighborhood called Passaic, New Jersey, where Jerry Gorman, a 35 year-old depressed Wal-Mart manager dreams of more. His biggest dream is to

Maybe being a pilot would satisfy that dream. But, there is just one problem: Jerry is "clinically dyslexic." He can't fly a plane because he can't tell his left from his right side.

Maybe he can become a space man. He doesn't have

through the sky and the troubles of his life alike. Jerry has many obstacles he must face before reaching his ultimate goal of flying and must face them throughout his journey to the sky.

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Prospectus

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• Views expressed are opinions of staff and contributors and not necessarily that of the Prospectus or Parkland College.

• The Prospectus welcomes letters to the editor. We accept submissions from the Parkland community and the public. The editor will also consider original works of fiction and short writings if space is available.

• 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 Thursday immediately before the upcoming issue.

Front page credit: Aaron Geiger (Prospectus)

Chuck Shepherd's News of the Weird

LEAD STORY

One Industry That Needs No Stimulus: (1) Drug officials in California's Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity counties (north of San Francisco) estimated in January that two-thirds of the area's economy is based on probably illegal marijuana farming (illegal under federal law, but permitted for medical use by the state). One federal agent told MSNBC, "Nobody produces any better marijuana than (they) do right here." (2) In January, the director of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime acknowledged that during the bleak banking days of September and October 2008, with panic in the economy over the shortage of cash, often the main source available to some banks was drug dealers' steady deposits of money to be laundered.

The Continuing Crisis

—Community Property: (1) As part of a highly contentious New York divorce, surgeon Richard Batista, who in good times had donated a kidney to his wife, demanded in January that she either give it back or compensate him with \$1.5 million in consideration of the rarity of his kidney match. (2) Also in January, Thomas Rowley, 28, went on trial in Victorville, Calif., for his allegedly more direct approach two years ago after he and his girlfriend split. According to prosecutors, Rowley said that since he had paid for her breast implants, he felt entitled to recover them, allegedly by carving them out of her body (and consequently was charged with attempted murder).

—Intimate Health Care: (1) A sex-education advocacy orga-

nization in November complained in November about the government's program that, finally after years of resistance, provides prosthetic penises to newly transgendered males. The policy was nonetheless termed unfair because the devices are cosmetic only and do not "work." (Regulations prohibit taxpayer money for "sexual aids.") (2) In October, five employees of the health-care provider New Zealand Care resigned when the company ordered them to provide (as routine service to developmentally disabled patients who request it) assistance in masturbating.

—Episcopal priest Gregory Malia, 43, of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., buys top-dollar champagne at New York City nightclubs, even leaving five-figure tips and treating his favorite waitresses to shopping sprees, according to a December New York Daily News report. Said Malia (who is a hemophiliac and owns a pharmacy devoted to blood-disorder medicine), "I work hard. I make good money. How I spend it, that is my business." Waitresses interviewed by the Daily News said "Father Greg" is a sweetheart, never doing anything inappropriate, but exceedingly generous, whether alone or with business clients. Said one waitress, "A bad night for him is (a tip of) \$5,000."

—Forbes magazine reported in December that state authorities were investigating Beverly Hills, Calif., plastic surgeon Alan Bittner over his claim that he had created diesel fuel for his and his girlfriend's SUVs out of liposuctioned fat from his patients. California law is said to prohibit using medical waste for such a purpose, but Bittner's claims came to light in

patients' lawsuits over liposuction treatments, quoting Bittner as bragging about the biodiesel. Bittner wrote on one Web page (nottner online), "The vast majority of my patients request that I use their fat for fuel, and I have more fat than I can use."

Bright Ideas

—London's Gymbox in Bank athletic club, recognizing that lifting weights can be a boring way to exercise, introduced "human barbells" recently, hiring five men of various sizes (including two dwarfs) that customers could use for weights instead of the iron. One advantage of the humans is that, on request, they shout encouragement to the customer with each lift. The largest of the five is a 37-year-old, 340-pound man.

—Walter Tessier was charged with one of the pettiest of petit larceny counts in January as sheriff's deputies in Amsterdam, N.Y., said he tried to defraud a Price Chopper store. Tessier had purchased a \$10.99 lobster but returned it, claiming that it had turned "bad," and the store allowed him some crab meat in exchange, but employees discovered that the "lobster" was only its empty, carefully reconstructed shell that made it appear whole. Tessier then ran from the store but was arrested later at his home, where he had just finished the crab meat.

Family Values

—The sheriff in El Dorado, Kan., asked in January for help from the public in locating a missing boy named Adam. According to the sheriff, Adam's parents, Doug and Valerie Herrman, only

recently reported him missing, even though they had not seen him since he ran away in 1999, when he was 11. The Herrmans' attorney said that his clients were nonetheless "very worried about him."

—Parenting Handful: Late last year, Jack Burd, 5, of a rural area near Darwin, Australia, admitted to his dad that he had been kicked off the school bus for bad behavior (including hitting the driver in the head with an apple), provoking the father to use the episode as a teaching opportunity, according to the Northern Territory News. For the five-day suspension, Dad would not reward Jack by driving him but would make Jack walk the 2 1/2-hour, seven-mile distance to school and back each day. On the first day after the suspension, Dad proudly helped Jack aboard the bus, hopeful of having instilled a new maturity. However, three stops later, Jack was kicked off again, for fighting.

Recurring Themes

—A Prosecutor's Worst Nightmare: At a dramatic moment in the November trial of a bus driver accused of rape in Edmonton, Alberta, the prosecutor asked the victim on the witness stand to look around the courtroom and identify her attacker. The victim adjusted her glasses and scanned the room, but looked past the defense table and pointed confidently to a man in the gallery later identified as a Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reporter, who in fact had nothing to do with the rape. (The judge allowed her a second chance, based on the volume of other evidence against the defendant, and she correctly identified him.)

—Apparent closure was reached in 2006 in a long-running News of the Weird story in which, for sexual thrills, a man periodically telephoned managers of fast-food restaurants and, pretending to be a police detective, persuaded the manager to strip-search one or more employees, supposedly to recover stolen merchandise, and to describe the search over the phone. In January, another man, John Brady, 49, was arrested and charged on New York City's Staten Island with telephoning women at random and instructing them to perform digital rectal exams on themselves, claiming that he was doing research on the digestive system. At least one woman complied.

Least Competent Criminals

Life Imitates the Three Stooges: In January, inmates Regan Reti, 20, and Tiranara White, 21, who had been booked separately for different crimes on New Zealand's North Island and were handcuffed together for security at Hastings District Court, dashed out of the building and ran for their freedom. However, when they encountered a streetlamp in front of the courthouse, one man went to the right of it and the other to the left, and they slammed into each other, allowing jailers to catch up and re-arrest them. (A courthouse surveillance camera captured the moment, and the video has been a worldwide sensation.)

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 CHUCK SHEPHERD

THEATRE

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"Flight of the Lawnchair Man" stars Dallas Street (Jerry Gorman) and Mary Eisenhardt (Gracie). They do a superb job at portraying their characters. Dallas Street steals the show by bringing out the kid in Jerry Gorman. The rest of the cast create a fantastical world and help you to enter into their cartoon-like world.

"My favorite character was Big Jack Preston, the pilot played by Brad Mehrrens. He did a great job as a drunken pilot!" said audience member Bob Wolf.

The orchestra, directed by Tim Schirmer, sounded delightful as they performed their music throughout the entire musical comedy. All of the actors and actresses sang wonderfully and perfectly harmonized with the music.

The set designs as well as the cast are wonderfully colored and capture the essence of childhood dreams. The cast also danced most of the performance.

"My favorite part was the dance sequences that they did. It was really cool to see them

do that," said audience member Merissa.

Another great thing about this colorful, musical comedy was how they capture the essence of New Jersey.

"I used to live in Jersey. This play reminded me of back home. It made me feel good," said audience member Zach Streff.

Overall, this musical comedy was superbly done. Make time to go to this musical. It is too much fun to miss! Remaining show times are February 27, 28 at 8 p.m., March 5, 6, 7 at 8 p.m. and March 1 at 3 p.m. Don't miss out, buy your ticket now!

Theatre rating: 5 stars.

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Parkland CCID program reaches out to foreign students

By ALIYA PRESCOTT
Staff Writer

Remember in high school when you first met the new foreign exchange student from another country? Now there is a program for students from other countries to come to the United States to attend community colleges. It is called the Community College Initiative Program (CCI).

The CCI program originated at the January 2006 Presidents Summit on International Education. CCI provides funding to support students to study at community colleges in the United States, and is a cooperative agreement between Com-

munity Colleges for International Development (CCID) and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The program has been ongoing for two years and is part of a three year plan. Eligible students are recruited by Fulbright Commissions and U.S. Public Affairs offices in their home countries.

The students in this program come from a limited number of countries. Currently, at Parkland there are sixteen students from Brazil, South Africa, Egypt, Turkey, and Indonesia. A large portion of Parkland students in the program come from Brazil. Students are placed from countries our government considers stable democracies with developing

economies. In the third year of the program more countries will be included.

Students must only be from certain countries and at Parkland they have to pick an area of study in Computer Science Information Technology (CSIT). Other community college participants can study in fields including agriculture, business management and administration, tourism and hospitality management, and information technology. The purpose for the CCID program is to provide students with jobs skills that will help them develop the economy in their home countries. Once students have graduated with a one-year certificate (or a two-year

degree), they will return home to use these new skills.

In order to be eligible for the CCI program each student must have graduated from a secondary education. They need to have English skills, which includes six months of advanced English classes. The student also needs some work experience in the field they are entering. Lastly, they must submit a complete application and complete two institutional tests within the last two years.

In addition to a full course load, students study in the class called Freedom, Democracy, and Personal Responsibility. In this class the students study American government and democracy. American cul-

ture is learned by experiencing local customs and traditions. To do this students are paired with families in the area. Field trips are also scheduled and leadership skills are honed.

The CCI program provides funding for a round-trip airfare from their home country to the United States. In addition, the student receives health insurance, paid schooling, and cultural activities. The participants must return home at the end of their completion and cannot transfer to a four-year college in the United States.

Between the time the students arrive in summer and leave the following summer, they are busy studying. They also have recreational activi-

ties planned for them. Recently they have taken a ski trip and a trip to Six Flags, as well as played mini golf and paintball. These students also perform community service. They volunteer at food pantries, Krannert Center, and the Freedom Celebration Parade.

The Community College Initiative is a progressive program at Parkland and is a wonderful opportunity for students from foreign countries to come to America and learn skills to take back to their home countries. It truly is a once in a lifetime opportunity for them.



SPORTS

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void in the stewardship of the perpetually tough volleyball team.

"Being able to secure a coach of Vern's knowledge and background was important in replacing Mike. I feel he will be able to step right in and keep the program going at a high level and I don't anticipate any drop-off in the success of the program. Coach Trame and the players spoke very highly of Vern as an assistant and his knowledge of what it takes to be successful at the NJCAA level. Hopefully he will be able to retain at least one of our other assistant coaches to assist with the transition. I look forward to working with Vern to make sure that Parkland remains as one of the elite NJCAA Volleyball programs in the country," said Lovett.

The women's soccer team also has a new battle captain in Josh Alford. Alford spent his first 14 years living in Argentina, where he played soccer for several clubs such as Club Atletico de San Miguel del Monte, Club de Lobos, Huracan, and Velez.

Alford went to high school in upstate New York, where he continued his soccer career. During college he played for Parkland - his uncle resided in nearby Mahomet - and later attended Olivet Nazarene University. At Parkland he was a two-time all-conference first team and a two-time all-region first team player. He has also coached many clinics and camps for Parkland and

Olivet.

"Offense starts with defense, and defense starts with offense. I want to focus on all aspects of the game, up until the conference schedule starts, to get a feel for the team," said Alford.

You could call him a "young coach looking for success," which is what Alford is basing his coaching method off of this year. He hopes to make an impact in the league. Alford also mentioned that he wants to encourage his "girls to continue playing after Parkland," and aid them to a successful career.

Since living in Champaign, Alford has been very involved with the community. In the Fall of 2006, Josh was the assistant coach for the Parkland College women's team and later moved on as the boy's head soccer coach at Champaign Central HS and the Assistant Director for L.I.S.C.

In the Fall of 2007, Alford led the Maroons to the regional championship title.

Make sure to check out Coach Podlewski and Coach Alford in action, as they will be giving it their all this upcoming season.

Have a question, comment, or story idea for sports? Email Sean Hermann at shermann1@stu.parkland.edu.



ANGEL

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a kind of sense of experimentation with this new thing. But now, as you know, it's got to be there. Everyone has stuff online, it's expected, it's just part of the experience of coming to school, so it's got to be there. So for Parkland to have 24-hour support, and backups (you know for like if a bird flew into a transformer and the power went out), well we can't have all of our online classes gone. If you add up the cost of having all of these things on campus, it just makes sense to pay for a turn-key solution," he said.

"There are companies that all they do is host Web sites, for institutions or companies, and so they'll build rows and rows of servers, and they've got the backup power so that they never go down," he said.

Many students noticed last year that ANGEL's initial design was much simpler

compared to how it looks this year. Coup explained that the change had nothing to do with Parkland, but more the parent company of ANGEL. He also went on to say how the sleeker design may affect how well the ANGEL system works.

"That's just that company's decision on which way they want to go, or are going to go, and I'm sure that's to be competitive with all the other systems. I would imagine that there's a certain amount of looking around at other companies and a lot of competition," said Coup.

"I would say that with a new version that there may be bugs in it. If there are bugs, that's something that the hosting company and the software designers work out. They do a monthly news release, so every month we get updates on what's going on."

Coup says that with the addition of the packet shaper and the increased bandwidth, the performance of Parkland's

Internet and ANGEL had improved dramatically, with the exception of wireless Internet connections.

"As people connect to the Internet at Parkland wirelessly, they have a much smaller pipe to get through. We pipe all of the wireless Internet through a connection that is smaller than the usual wired connection, so that's just a choice that we've made here at the college. But we actually have a lot more bandwidth now than other community colleges. For instance our 30MB compared to Danville Community College, which is rumored to be 8MB," said Coup.

Parkland College's enrollments and facilities are growing, which means the structure of their internet will be changing to meet the increasing needs of students and faculty.

"The strategy this semester is this packet shaper, because I really think we have noticed that now, if we limit the vid-

eos and stuff like that, there is more room left over for academic things. Parkland is hoping to build new buildings and at the same time we have more online students and more online classes every semester so we're going to have to build infrastructure this way as well. Parkland College actually has more online classes than anyone else. About a third of our enrollment every semester is in online classes. There's never been a decrease in online enrollment," said Coup.

"We're asking ourselves, where will it stop? What will we run out of first: Teachers and classes, or the technical bandwidth and server space?" Coup joked.

If students ever do have problems with ANGEL or the Internet, they are encouraged to stop by room D106, or go to Parkland home page where there is an email address to contact Campus Tech.

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Our new First Lady

By **CHRISTI PARSONS**
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON—Michelle Obama's first days as first lady make her look a lot like "first mom."

She flops down on the floor to read books to children in public and schedules games for the kids at White House parties. Every afternoon after school, she's home to greet her daughters. She huddled with White House chefs in the kitchen to help preview Obama's first state dinner. And she has placed an explicit priority on opening up the White House to people who have never been invited there before.

She's also getting to know the neighborhood. On one recent tour of a community health center, Obama says she's there "to learn, to listen, to take information back where possible." She emphasizes she wants to "meet our new co-workers and our new neighbors."

It seems unlikely that Michelle Obama—Harvard-trained lawyer, high-powered administrator and outspoken advocate—will make that the outer limit of the role she is beginning to shape.

But whatever she has in mind, one thing is clear: She won't make the same opening mistakes as the last Ivy League attorney who held the job.

First lady Hillary Clinton suffered a backlash for barreling straight to the role once termed "co-president," after joking that she had chosen professional fulfillment instead of cookie-baking and tea-hosting.

Michelle Obama is clearly taking the opposite approach, starting with health and home and venturing outward from there. It's a more familiar route for the experienced six-figure professional with the reputation for sizing up the waters before diving in.

Obama's staff doesn't explicitly acknowledge the influence of Clinton, who had to overcome the fallout from her managing of health care reform that turned into a debacle for her husband's administration. After nearly winning the Democratic nomination for presi-

dent, she just left the U.S. Senate to become secretary of state.

Still, as they contemplate the first lady's political and policy role, she and her staff are doing so from the safety of the well-trodden path.

"You have this undefined role of first lady," said Jackie Norris, a campaign aide who now serves as Obama's chief of staff. "She wants to think about how to be the hostess, but are there other things she can do to help the dialogue?"

It's not just that Michelle Obama has the Hillary Clinton example from which to learn. She's from a generation informed by the lessons of Clinton and her contemporaries, and part of a wave of working women who more often insist on having fulfilling lives at home, too.

That assumption is implicit in the "work-life balance" message Michelle Obama espouses so often.

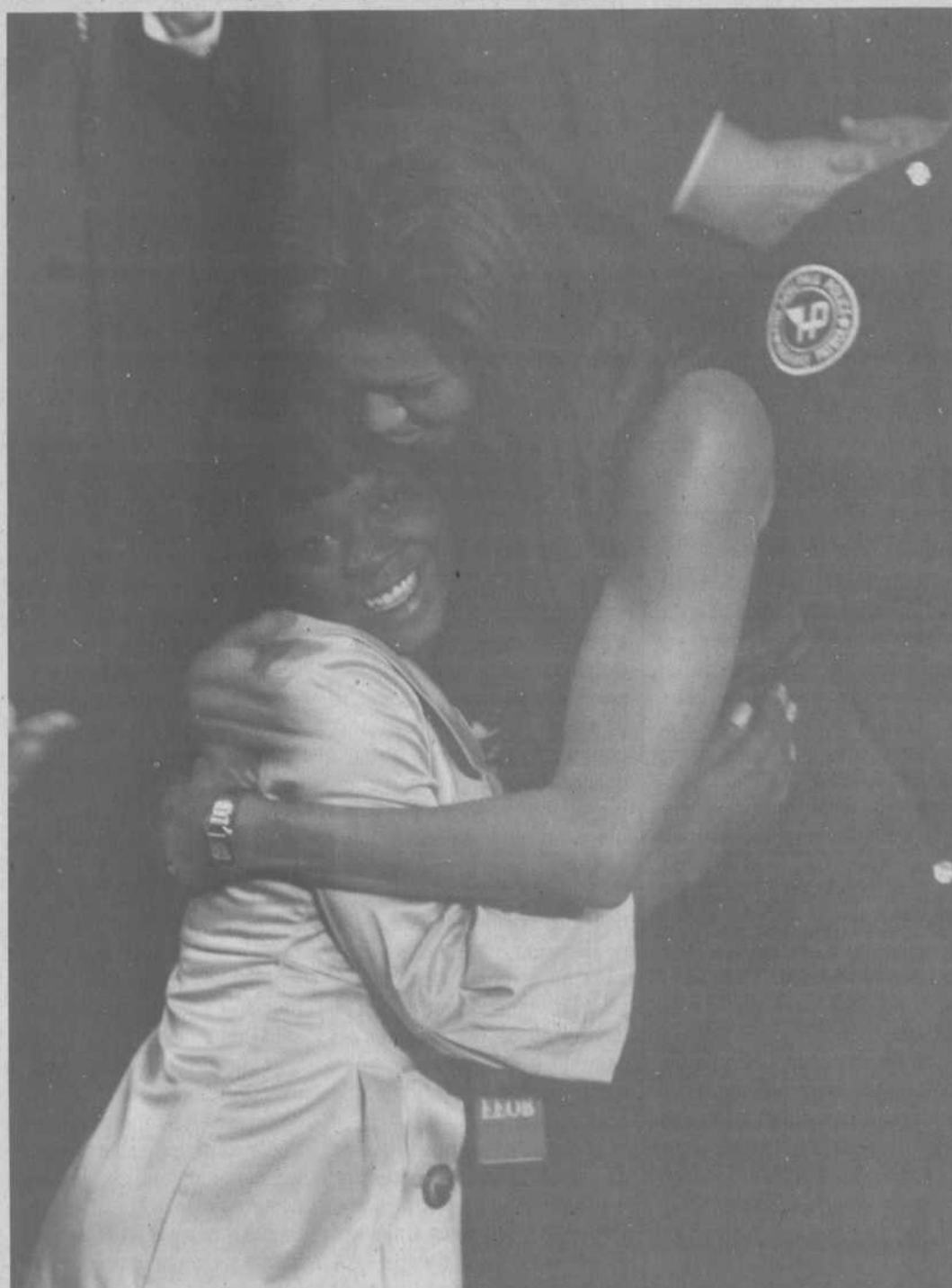
And it's evident in the way she is making her way in Washington so far, working outward from her White House quarters in concentric circles.

"She is looking and learning, and isn't going to make the same mistakes because she's aware of what the mistakes were," said Letitia Baldrige, the author who formerly served as social secretary to Jacqueline Kennedy when she was first lady. "She doesn't have to burst forth like a night-blooming flower at midnight ... And she's going to end up having enormous influence because of it."

In Obama's early strategy, the order of business goes something like this: family, potential friends in government agencies, social services around town.

After a grueling campaign season, in which she insisted on being home to put her girls to bed each night, Michelle Obama now is focused on being there when they get home from the campuses of Sidwell Friends every afternoon.

One of her first tasks was to convene the White House residence staff, when about 75 people gathered in one of the state rooms to eat cake and meet the



First lady Michelle Obama hugs eighth-grader and special guest Ty'Sheoma Bethea of Dillon, South Carolina before President Barack Obama addresses a joint session of Congress on Tuesday, February 24, 2009, in the House of Representatives Chamber of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC.

George Bridges/MCT

woman who will serve as their figurative boss.

Not long after that, Obama began venturing out into community service and federal agencies, moving down the list as her schedule meshed with theirs.

At one day care center, she quickly moved off the chair set out for her to read books to children and sprawled casually on the floor, teasing and coaxing the children until, at the end of her visit, they piled onto her for a group hug.

"We were taught that you have to get to know the community that you're in, and you have to be a part of that community, you have to get to know it in order to actively engage in it," she said while sitting in a circle of teenagers at the Mary Center, a community health center in D.C.'s Adams Morgan neighborhood.

"D.C. is our community now," she said. "It's our home."

Like Hillary Clinton before her, Michelle Obama has felt the sting of public rebuke for

venturing boldly into the arena of political speech. While on the stump in the spring of last year, Obama drew fire from critics when she said that, for the first time in her adult life, she was really proud of her country "because it feels like hope is finally making a comeback."

The criticism was harsh, starting with a reproach from Cindy McCain, wife of the Republican presidential nominee, that she'd always been proud of her country.

Nevertheless, in several of her early forays, Obama has dabbled in advocacy for the new administration.

Speaking to educators—and to listeners well beyond, thanks to the bank of television cameras that followed—Obama talked about how the president's \$787 billion economic recovery package would help schools. At the Department of Interior, she talked about climate change and conservation.

Obama has the power to speak for the administration, said Arne Duncan, the former Chicago public schools chief who now serves as education secretary.

"She expresses the values and priorities, and how this administration is going to treat people," Duncan said. "There's a tremendous amount that can be learned about this administration from moments like that."

And yet when they were traveling together in the presidential limo, Duncan said, Michelle Obama was asking how his wife was doing and when she was going to get to Washington.

Likewise, friends say she has been less focused on social protocol than on making sure there are games—a different one every 15 minutes—for kids when they come to White House functions.

Savvy as her strategy might be, Baldrige said, Obama will be as influential as she is sincere.

"She's going to put the right emphasis on job and accomplishment, plus raising children," Baldrige said. "That's where she can inspire women of today, who are frantically trying to work their way up in the world and be compensated properly. Michelle is always going back to her kids ... She will help women realize that a woman can juggle the two, that she can find the division between family and job, and experience joy in both places."

(c) 2009, Chicago Tribune.

Welcome to Falling Rock National Park by Kid Shay

I believe in Manifest Destiny and the Second Amendment.

What's mine is mine, and what's yours is mine too.

Why won't anyone listen?

Is it the delivery?

It's the hate.

In our article on "Parkland Idol," we mistakenly referred to contestant Rosalie Ierardi as "Rosa Lee." The Prospectus regrets the error. If you would like to let us know of any incorrect information, or if you have personal comments or news tips, please visit our Web site or stop by X-155 at Parkland College.

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About Face(book)

MCT
Opinions

The following editorial appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on Thursday, Feb. 19:

Anyone who spends time online has at least a vague sense of the "service agreements" to which he routinely consents—dense documents filled with legal fine print that make up the "terms of service" for Web services or online groups.

Most people spend zero time reading the fine print. They typically click "accept" and move ahead without a second thought.

But this week, denizens of Facebook—one of the world's most popular online social networking groups—said "not so fast." Within a matter of hours, using Facebook's own site, they coalesced and pushed back. Remarkably, their outrage over what they perceived as a blatant privacy violation by Facebook operators caused Facebook to roll back the new terms.

The incident offers useful lessons in self control and collective action in the digital age.

For the uninitiated, Facebook is a site on which millions of people and groups maintain what's effectively a combination bulletin board, photo album, scrap book, phone tree and newsletter that they share with friends. The site originally catered to college students, but it no longer is just for kids.

Anyone over the age of 13 can become a Facebook member, build a "page" and avail himself of its services free of charge—but only after accepting terms of the service agreement.

Among the terms is one giving Facebook's proprietors "an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, worldwide license (with right to sublicense)" on everything a member posts on his page. You post a picture of yourself and your cat, for instance, and Facebook can do whatever it wants with it.

The terms of service said

BizFact

Social networking

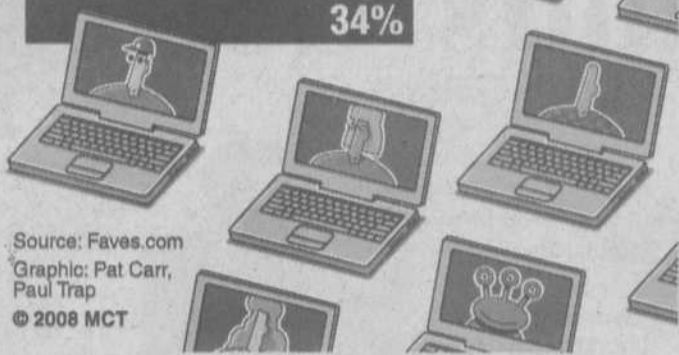
Percent of Web users who responded to a survey who viewed online social networks very positively:

Highly trust the information they get from friends, acquaintances in their online social networks

36%

Visit a social networking site at least weekly

34%



Source: Faves.com
Graphic: Pat Carr, Paul Trap
© 2008 MCT

that the "license granted above will automatically expire" when members remove content from their page. But Facebook recently quietly removed

that clause, meaning Facebook unilaterally claimed the right to use the material in perpetuity. So even if you took down the picture or quit the site,

Facebook still could use the picture (or other information) it had stored in its servers.

Things didn't stay quiet for long. The Consumerist—a consumer protection blog—put out word that Facebook was making a data grab. A virtual riot ensued as media outlets, old and new, picked up the story. Privacy advocates readied a complaint to be filed with the Federal Trade Commission.

Ironically, the real leverage came when consumer unhappiness showed signs of becoming a Facebook-driven movement. A new Facebook group—People Against the new Terms of Service—grew to nearly 90,000 strong.

Facebook's owners—a consortium of millionaire investors led by founder Mark Zuckerberg—caved. The site reinstated the original terms of service, offering face-saving mumbo jumbo about how "it was never our intention to confuse people or make them uneasy about sharing on Facebook."

Parents should remind their

kids—or maybe kids should remind their parents—that in the computer age, the only real guarantee of privacy is never to put anything in a computer you'd be afraid for someone else to see. There are too many ways for information to be copied and shared to be assured that someone, somewhere, doesn't have it. But that someone shouldn't be the people you do business with.

Facebook was hoisted on its own e-petard. By leveraging new media to organize a stampede, users struck fear into the heart of sharp operators at a multi-billion dollar enterprise. Sharp operators, take heed.

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



Prospectus News is hiring for Spring 2009 ...



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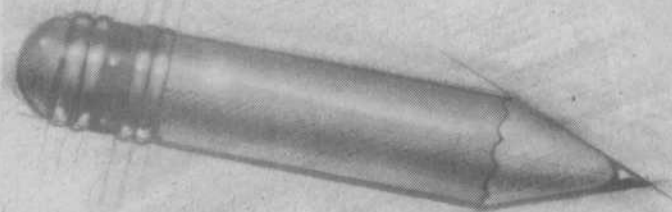
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PROSPECTUS

1969

SG Demands Code Revision

Letter Sent To Staerkel Tells Student Opinion

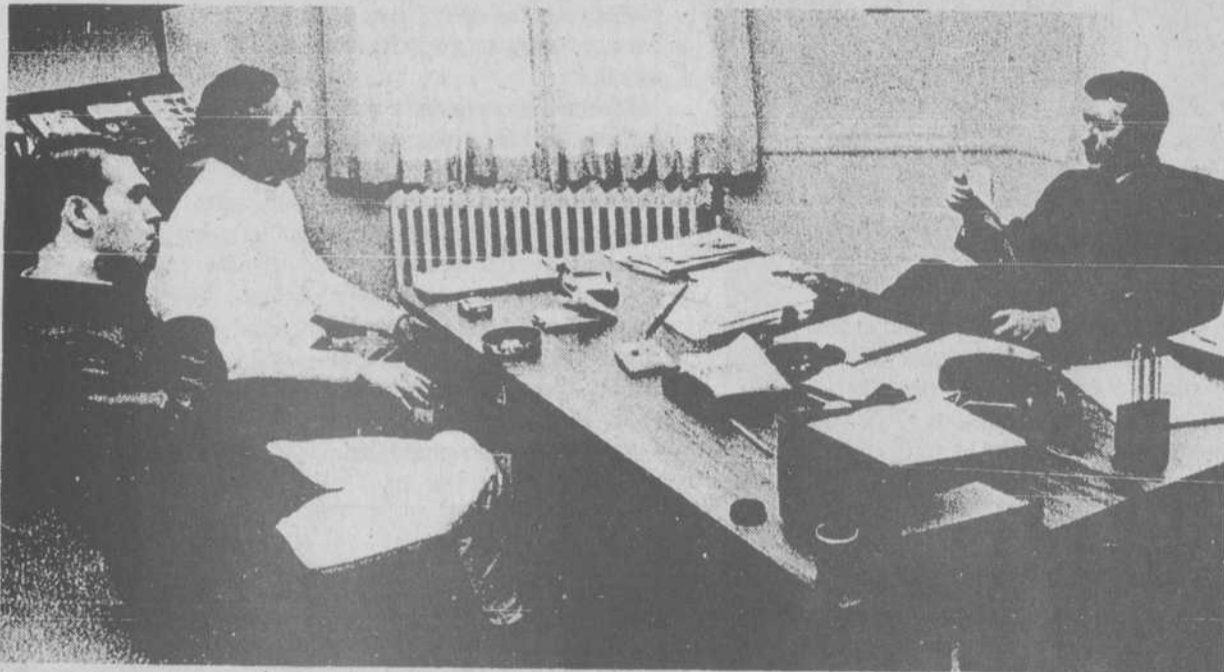


Photo by Bob King

"You've really thought about this, haven't you." President Staerkel commented after reading half the letter drafted by the Student Senate concerning "Remedial Action" on the New Student Conduct Code of Ethics. Staerkel was pleased with the procedural methods employed by the Student Senate and promised immediate study and consideration on his part. The letter was presented at the last Council meeting and Staerkel is to present the letter to the Board of Trustees at their next meeting. Pictured are Jim Schiller, left, Don Lookingbill, center, and President Staerkel.

by LARRY PETERS
The Student Government sent a three-part letter demanding "remedial action" to the PC Board of Trustees concerning the Student Ethics Code the board recently passed. During the special session of the Student Senate, several members voiced their disapproval of the code without any representation from the student body. Senators Jane Smith, Terry Townsend and Clarence Davidson stated that they were going to resign their "insignificant posts" if the students were not allowed any recognition by the school's administration.

rights during the meetings with the exception of the power to vote. Second, it asked that the student conduct code be taken under consideration by the Ethics subcommittee of the Student Affairs Committee from the Parkland College Association and that the Student Senate be given equal status on this sub-committee. This sub-committee will also act as an appeal board on all cases where expulsion from the college for disciplinary reasons is a result of the student's mis-conduct. The results of this sub-committee will then be sent to the board with recommendations that it be adopted.

Many comments from the audience accounted for an overwhelming approval to send the pre-drafted letter along with an attached signed petition expressing the resentment of the student body. Only one student, Victor Erickson, voiced his opinion in favor of the newly adopted student code. He indicated that the code was a bit vague, but that the student senators were misinterpreting the statements and were twisting the facts around. Erickson was immediately challenged by another student who stated that what he just said proves just the opposite in that you can twist the facts around and the administration can interpret them as they see fit to meet their needs.

The third item in the letter asks that a study commission be created consisting of at least one member from the student, faculty, and administration elements to determine a formalized procedure in dealing with unruly students.

The letter asks for three main demands in its remedial action. First, it asked that a student representative be seated during the board of directors meeting and that this student have equal

Black Senator, Terry Townsend, said he thought the code was adopted to "keep the niggers in order".

While Townsend spoke at the rostrum, black students began opposition to the efforts of the letter.

One student stated that the letter would be as ineffective as the recent demands by the B.S.A. He stated that the students should commence with a more sound approach, that of demonstrations against the school. One black student believed that these rules would encourage trouble rather than prevent it.

In other business, James Panzer made two motions. The first motion was to send a check for ten dollars from the Student Activity Fund to the Illinois Association of Colleges and Junior Colleges. Included would be a letter explaining that the money would be the final contribution this year. Panzer's motion was passed.

The second motion was to accept a Joint Statement on the Rights and Freedoms of Students (AAUP-Winter 1966). This document has been written by a delegation from ten national educational organizations in Washington, D.C. on November of 1966. However, this particular motion was tabled for further study.

Students Grumble At Code

by JIM MICHELETTI

The PROSPECTUS staff announces its second survey of student opinion on issues at PC. The issue at hand is the recently passed Student Ethics Code. A total of four questions were asked during these interviews. The first question: "What is your opinion of the code? Are you for or against? Why?" Names have been left out to protect the innocent.

In answer to question one: "I'm against it. For one reason, the BSA had that meeting with Staerkel not too long ago. Well, it seems to me that the code was directed to us black students."

"It stinks. It's too ambiguous. That is, with too many loopholes. Number 8 and number 14 are the same and number 20 means any teacher who doesn't like you, he could expell you."

"I'm against it. It seems like hardly grounds for suspension. It

makes me feel like a baby. If PC has to set up rules like this, it's very sad. I think it's unnecessary and I've never liked rules."

"If they have to have rules, then I don't see any point in making a big fuss about it. But the rules have been left wide open to all kinds of interpretation. I wonder if they decided who the judge is going to be--as to how these rules are interpreted. I think they're babyish."

"I say if they're going to kick out every student that breaks them, they won't have anyone left at PC."

"I want better rules. But we need some sort of rules to go by. There's often fighting in the Student Center. But they should just know how to act without anyone telling them. But if they aren't going to, then I think we need the rules."

"They're too broad. They certainly don't say much. But I suppose if you study them long enough they would make sense. What the basics are. It sounds like something a sixth grader would write."

"They're too ambiguous for one thing. All the power is left before them (administration)."

They can use all sorts of interpretation in them for their own evil ends. It leaves the students with no clear concepts. Some are ridiculous. I could call someone "goddam bastard" and I could get kicked out. The only way out is a general riot."

The second question asked the students is "would you break any of the rules?"

"Yes, of course. Just unknowingly, I might break them--that one about the swearing. It just comes natural to me."



"I Do Hope That Wasn't An Obscene Gesture"

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ASK
MINERVA



by Karen Krone

Dear Minerva,
I'm writing you again for information on marijuana. I want to know where it can be found, Straight

Dear Straight,
The only place where the weed can be found is the sunny fields of Mexico and on Green St,

This is in part the student conduct code as passed by the board of directors of Parkland College this past Tuesday night. It was emphasized by Dr. Staerkel that any criticisms and opinions by the student body will be considered by the administration. THE PROSPECTUS urges all concerned students to see their Student Senate representatives NOW! (beginning with the third paragraph) ...The College expects that each student will abide by the established regulations of the College governing student conduct. The following actions or activities will result in immediate expulsion from Parkland College or other disciplinary actions:

1. Unethical conduct during examinations in preparation of assignments designated by the instructor.
 2. Falsification of any official records required of the student by the College.
 3. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages of College property, at any College-sponsored event, or appearance on campus while under the influence of alcohol.
 4. Reckless driving and unauthorized parking of student cars on College property.
 5. Engaging, while on College property, in initiation practices or organizations not officially recognized by the college and which obviously call attention to the initiates or members of the organization.
 6. Participation in the name of the College in non-sanctioned activities off campus.
 7. Violating while on College facilities, municipal, county, state, or federal laws, statutes, or ordinances. Such violations are also subject to referral to civil authorities for investigation and action.
 8. Threatening, attempting, or committing physical violence against any person.
 9. Preventing or attempting to prevent any student from attending class or any other College activities.
 10. Preventing or attempting to prevent any person or any visitor to or guest of the College, on or off College facilities, from lawfully entering, leaving, or using any College facility.
 11. Preventing or attempting to prevent any members of the College community from carrying out his duties or any person from carrying on any lawful business or purpose he may have while on College facilities.
 12. Blocking pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
 13. Preventing, impeding or disrupting or attempting to impede, disrupt or prevent any College activity.
 14. Endangering the personal health, safety and welfare of himself or any other person.
 15. Damaging or destroying College facilities.
 16. Using language that is degrading or abusive to any person.
 17. Preventing or attempting to prevent any guest speaker from being heard or causing such speaker to suspend or interrupt his presentation.
 18. Entering upon College facilities other than for purposes of carrying on in good faith what College authorities deem to be proper functions.
 19. Violating special regulations which are necessary to govern various facilities and activities of the College.
 20. Any other action which is considered to be serious and detrimental to the welfare of Parkland. Individuals who are not students, and who violate these regulations, will be considered trespassers and treated accordingly.
- In the event of disruptive activities on campus, the College will immediately request assistance from the proper enforcement agencies, and those involved will be subject to arrest and/or College disciplinary action.



'Che' revolutionary filmmaking

By ROBERT W. BUTLER
MCT

It's a face recognized even by those who know nothing about the man behind it. He peers at us from T-shirts and posters and magazines, a bearded man in a beret who 42 years after his death remains the stuff of myth.

But just who was Che Guevara?

In his four-hour film "Che" director Steven Soderbergh digs at the mystique of the Latin American revolutionary.

But even Soderbergh admits that his subject—portrayed on screen by Benicio del Toro—remains a mystery.

"I suspect Che would find someone who does what I do for a living pretty silly," Soderbergh said in a recent phone conversation from his Los Angeles home.

"I don't think he cared much for movies. He didn't have much use for the arts in general. The only mention of movies I could find in his writing was very dismissive. He viewed them as a propaganda tool of the imperialists.

"In the society Che was trying to build, I wouldn't have a job."

Still, there was something about the arc of Guevara's life that appealed to Soderbergh.

The versatile and daring filmmaker is used to swimming against the current, dividing his projects between profitable popcorn (the "Ocean's" franchise, "Erin Brockovich") and small, personal films that sometimes never make it past the festival circuit.

He became fascinated by Che's status as a true believer, a man who would risk everything to fight imperialism on behalf of Latin America's impoverished masses.

"I didn't want this film to feel like a typical biography," Soderbergh said. "I didn't want to do much with Che's personal life, which wasn't really relevant to what I was interested in."

The key to getting a handle on Guevara, he said, is to understand his attraction to the jungle.

Born in Argentina and trained as a physician, Guevara joined Fidel Castro's Cuban revolution in 1955 and led an army in that country's mountains and jungles. He held important positions in the new Cuban government but left to organize Communist guerrilla units in the Congo and South America. He was killed in Bolivia in 1967.

"Out in the wild with a group of fighters must have been where Che felt the most complete," Soderbergh said. "I got a sense of that when we were out in the middle of nowhere shooting the movie. I had a tiny feeling of being somewhere remote with a small group of people trying to accomplish something."

"Those were the circumstances in which we saw the best version of Che. It was an opportunity for him to combine intellect and action."

But Soderbergh remains puzzled over how Guevara sustained his belief for so long in the face of so much adversity.

"We all get activated at some point about something. But our fervor tends to go up and down."

"Not Che. His ability to get up every morning and continue to go at it, day after day, year after year—that's what impressed me. Whether you like him or not, he was constantly sacrificing himself for someone else. Often for someone he'd never met."

The down side of Guevara's revolutionary fervor, Soderbergh said, was that it overwhelmed just about everything else.

"Apparently not even the men who fought and died with Che really knew him," Soderbergh said. "There's a great quote from a young doctor who fought alongside Che and was close to him. He said you had to love Che for free."

"Even this guy who admired Che was saying that he was impossible to embrace."

His goal in making "Che," Soderbergh said, was not to give a sense of what it's like to be Che, but rather what it was like to be around Che.

That approach dictated the look of the film. For example, there are virtually no close-ups of Del Toro.

"It seemed it would be a violation of Che's ethos to isolate him in the frame," Soderbergh explained. "It was the opposite of what he was about. I purposely grouped him with other characters whenever I could."

So daunting is the Guevara legend that after years of planning to play Che, Del Toro got cold feet as filming approached.

"Benicio was feeling pretty anxious. I said, 'Look, let's just acknowledge that it's impossible to do this. You can't get all of somebody in a movie, especially someone who lived a life like this. Let's just accept it and do it anyway.'"

Soderbergh said he tried to be totally objective.

"I'm just trying to give an impression of what I learned about the man through all my research."

The results haven't been without controversy. A screening of "Che" in Miami, where Cuban exiles are a powerful political force, ended in a screaming match.

"You can imagine the response," Soderbergh said. "They were livid. But given some people's experience, I can understand that. For certain people, Che is totally defined by what happened in the six months after the success of the Cuban revolution. He supervised the executions of Batista supporters. And he never expressed any remorse about it."

"People who consider him a butcher won't be satisfied by our film."

"Che" often feels more like a documentary than a fictional re-creation, something that Soderbergh attributes to the manner in which it was filmed in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Bolivia,

Spain and New York City.

"The feel was dictated by the speed with which we were shooting. We had a tight schedule and little money, so you didn't have time to act. We did everything in two or three takes and moved on. You didn't have time for lots of analysis ... which was a good thing."

"I warned all the actors that I wouldn't have time to be as overtly supportive as I'd like and that they'd have to take care of themselves."

"But the fact that they were all adrift bound them to each other and resulted in a sense of collusion that happens in the movie. What happened to Che's soldiers happened to the cast. That's why it feels lived-in rather than acted."

Soderbergh says he's always working on two or three projects.

"I'm often surprised that so many well-regarded filmmakers don't work more. The only way to get better is to shoot. And my metaphor is more accelerated now than when I started out in this business. If there's no money for a big movie, you make a little movie."

WHAT'S NEXT

Director Steven Soderbergh talks about his projects after "Che":

"The Informant" (Sept. 18): "A comedy that couldn't have been more different" from "Che," Soderbergh says. "It was the opposite of what he was about. I purposely grouped him with other characters whenever I could."

"The Girlfriend Experience" (2009): He says he's putting the finishing touches on this "low-budget movie about a female escort in Manhattan."

"Cleopatra" (2011): "This spring we were supposed to do a musical in 3-D about Cleopatra," starring Catherine Zeta-Jones. "But one of our actors had a scheduling problem, and we had to push it to next year. As a result I had a couple of weeks when I wasn't working on anything, and I was really disoriented. It was the first time that had happened in 10 years."

(c) 2009

The Kansas City Star.

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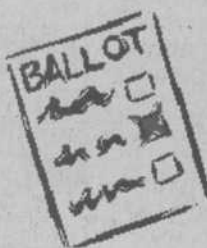


Want to be a part of Parkland's Student Government?

Soon, Student Government at Parkland College, will hold elections for the positions of: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Trustee and Senators. The Office of Student Life will be taking applications for these positions until Thursday, March 6th.

If interested please note the following timetable:

- Pick-up an election packet in the Office of Student Life on or before March 5.
- Application, petition, and essay must be turned in to the Office of Student Life in room X-153 by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 5, 2009.
- Candidates will attend a meeting in room X-150 at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, March 6.
- Student elections will be held March 30, March 31, and April 1 in the College Center.



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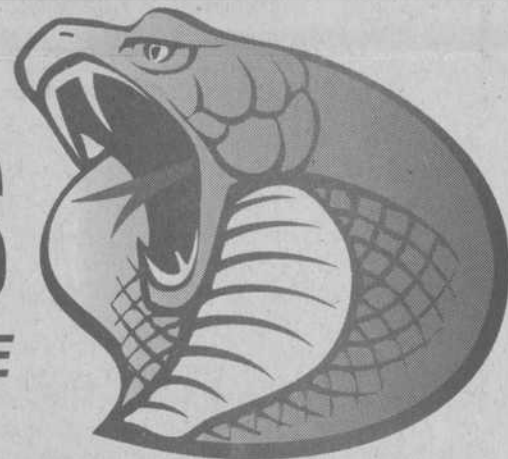
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Charlie Manney gazes at a watercolor piece by Paul Ching-Bor in Parkland's art gallery. Ching-Bor is one of many artists that will be featured in "State of the Art 2009: National Biennial Watercolor Invitational" which Aletha Jones will curate, Monday, January 12 through Wednesday, April 1. A reception will be held March 5, 6 to 8p.m. and Gallery Talk will take place at 7p.m. with Aletha Jones.

SHOP SMART, SAVE BIG

For many families, grocery shopping is not just a monotonous weekly ritual — it's increasingly painful, thanks to rising food prices and the souring economy.

But shoppers also have never had more options. Think about it: From Walgreens to Super Target, ethnic groceries to farmers markets, food is everywhere.

Those willing to invest extra time and effort — and break out of habits they've had for years — can find bargains, experts say.

"You have to break down the barriers to what you think," says Phil Lempert, a consumer trend-watcher and food-marketing expert known as the Supermarket Guru. That means buying items in unexpected places, such as cheap milk in drugstores.

An increasing number of families are changing their ways, Lempert adds. He gets more than 6,000 e-mails every week from shoppers looking to cut their grocery bills. Here are some of his tips, as well as others from chefs and retailers. With their advice and a little research, you'll keep more money in your wallet.

PLAN AHEAD

"The most important thing to do is have a shopping list and stick to it" to avoid wasting money on impulse buys, Lempert says. The list includes food for meals you'll prepare, as well as staples. Using a list prevents you from wasting money on impulse buys.

Choose meals that use what's already in your kitchen, as well as ones with similar ingredient lists, so you eat that whole bunch of cilantro before it spoils.

Also consider budget-friendly recipes. Examples include \$2-per-serving recipes at pamperedchef.com, and the federal government's collection of similarly priced recipes at recipefinder.nal.usda.gov.

After making a list, check the kitchen.

"Lots of people put stuff on their shopping list and find out later that they have it in the freezer or cupboard already," Lempert says.

Then research groceries as you would a new computer. Using the Internet, newspaper advertisements and a telephone, shoppers can compare deals at supermarkets, drugstores, bulk and discount retailers, and other shops.

"You've got to read the ads," says Tim Pashayan, co-owner of Hi-Life Catering & Banquets in Kingsburg, Calif.

Trips to these stores won't even require extra gasoline — if you choose retailers that are part of your normal routine.

"Instead of going to one store, you're going to go to two or three stores," Lempert says.

And don't forget coupons.

Lempert even has a suggestion for shoppers who don't have time to clip coupons. "Put the kids in charge," he says. "Give them a percentage of what they save as their allowance or part of their allowance."

LOOK FOR DEALS

After you've made a grocery list and researched the week's sales at different stores, it's time to shop.

To get the best quality and value, treat food shopping like an adventure and not a chore. Lempert advises going food shopping several times a week.

"When you go shopping for two to three meals, you're focused," he says, pointing out that cramming enough food for a week (or more) into one shopping trip can require rushing through stores. As a result, shoppers might not check for healthy ingredients, compare per-unit prices or discover all the deals — especially if they're in a store they haven't explored before.

Yes, this approach takes more time than filling up the SUV at a Super Wal-Mart once a month. But it's also more pleasant, Lempert says.

"In the past 10 to 15 years, we've taken the enjoyment out of shopping for food," he says. "Food should be enjoyment. It's more than just filling our bellies."

Here are some examples of what you might

Supermarket Guru offers tips to stretch your budget and still put food on the table

BY JOAN OBRA
McClatchy Newspapers

miss if you don't pay attention:

■ **Check discount grocers for specialty and organic food.**

For example, the Grocery Outlet, a western discount chain, which started in the mid-1940s as a canned-food retailer, now carries discounted Kashi cereals, spices from Crate & Barrel and Horizon organic butter.

If you see something you like at a discount retailer, buy it quickly.

The selection changes all the time, says Blain Dorn, owner of the Grocery Outlet in Fresno, Calif. That's because the stores sell discontinued items, production overruns, food with label changes and test market products.

Some customers come in to hunt for unusual items, such as the Siljans Traditional Whole Rye Swedish crisp bread, which sold out quickly, Dorn says. Others come in for the perennially low prices, such as \$1.99 for four pounds of bananas. (Compare this price to the 80 cents a pound at some markets during a recent week.)

Lempert sees stores such as the Grocery Outlet as places to "save money and have some fun" while hunting for treasures. But check the expiration dates, he says — some products may need to be consumed quickly.

■ **For organic produce, try the farmers markets.** Double-check with farmers to be sure their fruits and vegetables are certified organic, and ask them whether they have deals. Some farms sell blemished organic fruits and vegetables at a deeply discounted rate. Look for the "ugly" sign, and choose items that don't require you to cut off large pieces.

And compare prices with those at stores. "Just because it's a farmers market doesn't mean it's less expensive," Lempert says.

■ **Ethnic stores and butcher shops are great sources for low-cost meats, seafood, eggs and specialty items.**

"They don't advertise them, but they have killer deals," Pashayan says. "If you're a vegetarian, you have to go — otherwise you're missing out."

Unfortunately, some folks feel nervous about shopping in these stores. Pashayan puts it bluntly: "White people are turned off. They're afraid."

Get over that discomfort and a world of deals and unusual foods opens up to you.

Lempert also likes independent grocers and butcher shops, as long as they meet certain standards.

"Talk to these people and ask questions," he says. "Say, 'When do you get your seafood and meat, and where does it come from?'"

Check expiration dates and the cleanliness of the meat and seafood cases, and be sure that different types of meat and seafood are kept separate from each other.

And check the origin of the products. Given China's recent problems with melamine-tainted eggs, milk and candy, some shoppers may be wary of Chinese products.

■ **For higher-end meats, Costco is the place to go** — if you have some butchering skills.

Shoppers get the best value by choosing bulk pieces and cutting it up themselves, says Wendy Carroll, the personal chef behind Seasoned to Taste in Fresno, Calif. For example, she buys the short end of beef tenderloin and slices it herself. It's a much cheaper way to get filet mignon, she says.

■ **Even high-end stores are pushing the bargains.** Some Whole Foods Markets are offering value tours for their shoppers, teaching them to look for its private label, the 365 Everyday Value brand.

Guides point out the "great buy" sales, which match the lowest price or are priced lower than any of Whole Foods' competitors. They give out copies of "The Whole Deal," a booklet with coupons and low-cost recipes using items sold in the store. Also, check out the Whole Deal section of Whole Foods' Web site at www.wholefoodsmarket.com/products/wholedeal/index.php

SHOP STRATEGICALLY

By now, it should be clear that you can find deals on groceries just about anywhere. But finding a good store is just one step. How you shop there also matters.

To take advantage of all the sales in a store, "you want to make sure that you're signed up for the store's frequent shopper program," Lempert says. Also bring a notebook and write down per-unit prices for your staple foods at a variety of stores. Be sure to bring a calculator to stores such as Costco and Sam's Club.

"Very often, warehouse clubs do not have unit pricing," Lempert says. "And it's not the same size that you're used to."

By keeping this record over time, you'll get a good feel for prices and know at a glance whether you're getting a great deal.

Also choose store brands over name brands to save money, but first check nutritional labels and ingredients to make sure you're getting a comparable product. The store brands won't offer you the latest innovations in flavors, Lempert says, but they do have another advantage: Since most private-label brands have a money-back guarantee, you usually can return them if you don't like them.

When you find a great price on a staple, stock up — as long as it won't spoil before you eat it, Lempert says. Follow the refrigerator and freezer guidelines from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (at www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fttstore.html). Keep the product in its original packaging, and use a marker to date it.

With that caveat, the frozen-foods section of a store is a great place to find deals on seafood and produce that's not in season.

Seafood lovers may thumb their noses at frozen fish, but if it's flash-frozen at sea and sealed in cryovac, it often offers better flavor and texture than the days-old, so-called "fresh" fish, Lempert says. In addition, frozen fish also costs a fraction of the price at the counter.

And while you'll generally get the best quality and prices for locally grown, fresh produce, frozen fruits and vegetables are the next-best option.

Warehouse stores, such as Sam's Club, require a certain shopping strategy. Consider the package sizes and expiration dates of food, Lempert says. Make sure you have room to store the items and that you can finish them before they spoil.

"One of the things I buy is Orville Redenbacher microwave popcorn," he says. "The packages are small and will last."

Armed with these experts' tips, you'll find new deals — if you spend some time in a wide range of shops.

"You've got to really slow down," Lempert says. Once you've bought your preferred brands, shopping should be "a little adventurous and a little fun."

