

Excellence comes in threes

The ICCTA Cultivator: Intellect Kaizad Irani

By **KATHLEEN SERINO**
Prospectus Staff Writer

Kaizad Irani, Horticulture and Landscape Design Program Director, will be presented with the Illinois Community College Trustees Award on June 6, 2008. Recipients are said to have performed outstanding ministrations as an educator and as servants for the community.

Irani won the award recently and discovered his honor via email. In an interview last week Irani said he felt honored to receive the award and treats it as such. "Why me?" he said he asked himself when he discovered the good news.

"Wow, this is quite an honor," he said.

Irani has accomplished a lot during his time spent at Parkland. In his early years as a part-time faculty member he pushed for the establishment of a full-time associate's degree program in landscape design. Since then he has added a floral design certificate, a turf specialization, and continues to develop the landscape design program today.

Irani has many duties at Parkland, although administrating isn't one of his favorites. He believes teaching comes first. He also leads his students to national conferences and takes them on field trips. He is also an active member in several committees on and off campus as well as a visiting faculty member at the University of Illinois.

Irani and his students have also worked hard to beautify the campus. He designed the water feature at the front entrance of the campus, which his students built. He also works on other campus projects.

Irani designed a large labyrinth—a flat sculpture fashioned out of pavers and small plants—for Crystal Lake Park. He is currently finishing up the Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club beautification project with his Landscape and Design class and the Alternative Spring Break students

See **Irani** on page 8



From left: Kaizad Irani (ICCTA Award), Jan Thom (Gold Award), and Omar Adawi (NISOD Award) have elevated Parkland to new levels of excellence.

Andrew Serino/Prospectus

The Gold Award: Advisor Jan Thom

By **KATHLEEN SERINO**
Prospectus Staff Writer

While hanging around the Center for Academic Success one morning at least three students came in to schedule appointments with Jan Thom—and I was only there for a few minutes.

Last month, Parkland College Association's Professional Development Subcommittee for Staff Concerns and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning declared Thom the recipient of the Gold Award given to outstanding employees with more than half a decade of service to Parkland College.

Pam Lau, Director for the Center of Academic Success, nominated Thom.

Thom said on winning the award, "I felt the same as when [Lau] asked me if she could nominate me."

Thom is currently a Student Development Advocate in the Center for Academic Success. This means she advises students of all kinds (transfers, beginners, etc.) when it comes to selecting classes that they are unsure about.

Lau holds a great respect for Thom. According to Lau, Thom does her job and beyond. She makes the students feel comfortable enough to communicate with her when they really need help.

"She's the mediator," Lau said. "But she brings in tremendous, intrapersonal skills. Jan, by nature and by her experience...has a very good sense of the detail about the network of things." Lau has noticed how Thom can pool from various

See **Thom** on page 9

The NISOD honoree: Mentor Omar Adawi

By **BRIANA STODDEN**
Prospectus Photography Editor

[Editor's Note: This article appeared in an earlier edition of the Prospectus.]

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) has chosen Parkland's own Professor Omar Adawi to honor at the upcoming conference in Austin, Texas on May 25-28. NISOD has been honoring the world's best in higher education since 1978.

NISOD is dedicated to the professional development of faculty, administrators, and staff; and to continued improvement of education, with an ultimate goal of student success. Adawi was previously nominated in 1999 and 2004 for this prestigious award.

"A student will want to learn more about a subject if they see how it applies to real life situations—good education should engage in professional development activities to keep current with the latest innovations in teaching and learning," said Adawi.

NISOD members include more than 700 community colleges around the world. This incorporates almost every large community college district, the majority of urban and technical colleges in the United States and Canada, and more than 200 small, rural colleges around the world.

To be nominated for the NISOD award, faculty must have at least five years of experience have to submit a portfolio to the Professional Development Committee. These portfolios include the teacher's achievements, personal values in regards to teaching and learning, and letters of recommendation from colleagues and students.

"When considering my time as a student [at Parkland] and also at the Univer-

See **Adawi** on page 9

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• 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.



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CHUCK SHEPHERD'S NEWS OF THE WEIRD

By CHUCK SHEPHERD

Lead Story

Lawyer confidentiality rules kept one man improperly on death row for 10 years and a probably innocent man in prison for 26, according to news that surfaced in January (in Virginia) and March (in Illinois). Daryl Atkins (sentenced to death in 1997) was the victim of probable prosecutorial misconduct, according to his co-defendant's lawyer, Leslie Smith, who said he witnessed the misconduct but could not report it because a lesser sentence for Atkins would have exposed his own client to greater punishment. In Illinois, Alton Logan was convicted of a murder during a 1982 robbery. However, shortly afterward, Andrew Wilson admitted to his lawyers that he was the murderer, but bar association rules prohibited them from revealing that. When Wilson died in 2007, the lawyers went public, and Logan's case has been re-opened.

The Aristocrats!

Mayor Art Madrid of La Mesa, Calif., apologized in February for an incident the week before when police found him, along with a female city employee, passed out about 10:30 p.m. Madrid was lying on the sidewalk near an SUV; the woman was in the driver's seat with her legs sticking out the open door; and vomit littered the area. (2) A patient reporting for an appointment with dentist Norman Rubin in Smithtown, N.Y., in March told the New York Post that Rubin was in the otherwise-empty office, passed out, drooling, with a gas mask on his face. (Rubin later told the Post, in defense, that it was, after all, his lunch hour.)

The Continuing Crisis

•Dirk Opalka (whose fox scored 96 of 100 possible points) won best in show at the World Taxidermy Championships in February in Salzburg, Austria, beating over 100 competitors in the art of stretching animal skin over fake bodies so the critters look better than they ever looked alive. The attention to detail was astonishing, according to a dispatch in *Der Spiegel*, on such features as a stag's nostrils, a hyena's lips, a hamster's whiskers, the neck length of a

female peregrine falcon (precisely 5.5 cm), and the proper rosinness of a bat's anus.

•In March, the Tokyo High Court reversed the conviction of pinup model Serena Kozakura, who had been found guilty of kicking a hole in the door of her former boyfriend's apartment so she could break in and scream at him. Kozakura had appealed, claiming that the man had made the hole himself, and as evidence, explained that she could never have squeezed through it, anyway, because her breasts are too big. That argument apparently won the day, creating enough "reasonable doubt" to overturn the verdict.

•Two German air force sergeants were suspended in December after being caught in a side venture selling sausages based on an old family recipe requiring human blood. Their first batches were made with their own, but as they began mass-producing, they had allegedly asked their colleagues because, according to instructions from one of the men's grandmothers, all blood must be "fresh." "Do not use too many breadcrumbs," she had written, "but if the blood starts to curdle, stir in a teaspoon of wine vinegar."

•Court documents revealed in March that federal judge Eduardo Robreno had fined New York mortgage banker Aaron Wider and his lawyer \$29,000 for using variations of the "F word" 73 times (thus, about \$367 per usage) during a contentious deposition he gave in a lawsuit brought by GMAC Bank.

•Several psychotherapists told *The New York Times* in February that treatments are being developed for people who are excessively worried about their own carbon emissions being responsible for "global warming." More than 120 therapists are now listed as specialists in the field on *Ecopsychology.org*, and schools such as Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Ore., have created courses on counseling such patients.

Family Values

•Sheila and Paul Garcia of Northfleet, England, acknowledged to London's *Daily Mail* in February that they invited their 16-year-old daughter's boyfriend to come live with her in her bedroom, despite the fact that he is 36 and divorced, with

one child. The parents said they weren't thrilled with the situation, but that it was preferable to the daughter's running away with the man.

•Cutting-Edge Parenting: (1) Sheriff's deputies in the Orlando area were on the lookout in March for two women who, according to surveillance video from the Magical Car Wash, had pulled into a stall and deposited coins but then proceeded only to scold and then pressure-wash a small child. (2) Aron Pritchard, 27, was convicted of child endangerment in March in Hutchinson, Kan., after a jury declined to accept his explanation for his girlfriend's kids, age 2 and 3, being burned in a hot clothes dryer. Pritchard said he was just trying to show them they could have fun without necessarily spending money.

Least Competent Criminals

Not Ready for Prime Time: (1) Two boys, 12 and 14, were quickly arrested in Port St. Lucie, Fla., in March when they tried to rob a woman who was working at a counter behind protective glass in an office, by picking up the convenience phone and threatening her, implying that they had a gun. The woman was in no danger because of the protective glass, but besides that, the place they had chosen for the hit was a regional office of the Port St. Lucie police department. (2) Donald Baker, 51, was re-arrested in March in Peterborough, Ontario, when he called the police department to request a wake-up call for his court appearance the next morning; amazed at his audacity, police ran a records check and found an additional arrest warrant on him.

Updates

•News of the Weird cited a police report last May that an unidentified man in Guelph, Ontario, had committed at least three incidents of approaching women and asking to be kicked in the groin. After seven such incidents, Jarrett Loft, 28, pleaded guilty in March 2008 to one count and was sentenced to 60 days in jail. Loft offered no explanation for his behavior, other than that he was "curious." One victim, saying that she feared what Loft might do if she refused, repeatedly kicked him between the legs, after which he

thanked her and rode off on his bicycle.

•Good Friday in the Philippines town of San Pedro Cutud has meant, for over 20 years, that two dozen men will line up to be nailed to a wooden cross for a few minutes each to mark their penitence for sins of the previous year (although this year, the government issued an advisory recommending getting tetanus shots and using only sterile nails). Ruben Enaje, 47, was first in line once again (the 22nd time in 23 years that he has been crucified) and, once again, screamed in agony for five minutes at the 6-inch nails driven into both palms and both feet while he lay on the cross. Before the crucifixions, dozens of other men punished themselves by whipping their backs bloody, using bamboo rods.

Undignified Deaths

A 76-year-old Baptist minister was found dead in Clarksville, Tenn., in March after he had tried to pull a goat back into a fenced-in area of his property; apparently, the goat had resisted the slip knot, and somehow the animal's jumping had wound the rope around the minister's feet and neck, and he had begun to turn blue by the time his wife found him. (2) The day before that, an 82-year-old man in Lake Hallie, Wis., was killed when he apparently slipped while using a plumber's auger on his septic tank and fell in, head first, eventually drowning.

(Visit Chuck Shepherd daily at <http://NewsoftheWeird.blogspot.com> or www.NewsoftheWeird.com. Send your Weird News to WeirdNewsTips@yahoo.com or P.O. Box 18737, Tampa, FL 33679.)

Use Earth Day to make easy (but lasting) changes

By **AARON GEIGER**
Prospectus Editor

It doesn't take much intelligence to understand that our planet is in grave danger. Scientists can provide data until their grants run out, but in our hearts we already know what they back up factually—that human beings are systematically and methodically committing a form of suicide. Even small children know the basics of what is wrong and what is right in terms of protecting our resources; they sing along with Jack Johnson about reducing, reusing, and recycling; they scold people for throwing litter out of their cars.

If they only knew how monumental and fundamental their values truly are.

We live in a society where

money and time prevails. Ask yourself how many times have you taken an easier path when you know with just a little more work, and you could make a positive environmental impact? I'm in the same boat as you, so I wouldn't dare as much to preach to you from a higher position.

But as a former outdoor educator, and professed Green Party member, I have learned a lot about how to lessen the foot-steps that we have on the soft grass of the world. The biggest lesson that I have learned is that in order to make a difference, start with the small stuff. Most people think to themselves, "Well I would drive an electric car, but the car companies are too stuck on oil to change their cars!" Or perhaps people think, "I would put solar panels on my house, but I don't know how to

do it, and neither can I afford to do it."

They don't realize that the smallest changes in habits, performed consistently, make the world of difference. And the more people that follow the small stuff, the grander life could be. So here's a list of things that you can do to make life better for everyone (and some of these things I'm going to mention are ridiculously easy):

- Turn off your lights when they're not in use.

- Don't forget to clean or replace your filters monthly (I'll bet a lot of you students are going, "What?")

- What's easily recyclable? Steel and aluminum cans, newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, plastic beverage bottles, milk jugs (no caps, please), glass bottles and jars, cereal boxes, other clean and dry boxes.

- Your computers and cell phones are recyclable, however make sure you find the proper places to recycle them; some business export the left-over scrap to places like China, where impoverished people melt down the pieces for their precious metals, thereby caus-

ing great harm to their bodies.

- Household toxins can be recycled, too. Check out www.nrc-recycle.org to learn what to do with oil and antifreeze, batteries, insect sprays, paint, and pool chemicals. Also, never flush your old prescription medications down the toilet.

- Encourage your family, teachers, and peers to go "paperless." Why turn in a report on a piece of paper when you can upload it to the professor just as easily? Avoid using products that are made from wood; stick to post-consumer recycled products.

- Check your car's tires regularly. You'll get more juice squeezed out of that \$3.50 gallon of gas.

- Carpool, bike, or take the bus. Spring is coming, and there's nothing like taking the Greenbelt Bikeway to Parkland.

- Soak your pots and pans instead of running the water to wash them. Save money.

- Go to Goodwill. Buy secondhand. Hit the garage sales. Trade with friends.

- Utilize the new compact fluorescent bulbs. Switching just three of your most used bulbs with these badboys, and you'll save almost \$100 a year.

- Turn your water heater thermostat down to 120. You'll still get very hot water, and you'll save a couple of hundred dollars annually.

- Like Sesame Street says, "Turn off the water when you brush your teeth."

- Bring your own bags to the store. Schnuck's and County Market are a couple of grocery stores that sell reusable bags for cheap. Some stores even give you a refund if you use your own bags.

- Put a weight inside the tank of your toilet. The water that gets displaced will save you money, and conserve water.

- The Worldwatch Institute advocates that even the heartiest carnivore can go one meatless meal more per week. The benefits of not eating meat include: freeing up to ten times more resources in grain-based food, preventing diseases such as Avian flu, saving energy, eliminating carbon and methane emissions, eliminating hazardous working environments, and promoting overall personal health. The benefits of using less meat products potentially save BILLIONS of dollars.

See **Earth** on page 12



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Students without borders give college some culture ■ Fundraiser showcases Parkland's vast diversity, humanity

By **BETH VOIGT**
Prospectus Features Writer

There is a huge F-shaped balloon floating near a pile of snacks at the International Student Association (ISA) meeting, and club advisor Dr. Sue Kuykendall looks pleased. The balloon is one of the letters from a display at the International Cultures Fair, hosted by the ISA on April 9. The event was a grand success, and next day's meeting is abuzz with plans for their next event.

"What about the party?" asks ISA president Jonghwan Yang, who is from South Korea. He passes a mixed bowl of Turkish, Italian, and Korean treats around the room as everyone discusses where to celebrate another great collaborative effort between a huge group of both international and local students.

Members of the ISA, the French Club, the German Club, the African Students Association, Club Latino, the Muslim Student Association, and the Engineering Club all worked hard together to stage an event so large it spread over most of the college center.

"Is it going to be before I clean or after?" asks Turkish student Amac Ozen, after someone nominates him to be the host of the party. There is a brief discussion about whether the leftovers from the buffet should be used as part of a potluck, but the food was so popular that there isn't much left. Instead, the students decide to go to one of the

restaurants that generously donated food for the fair.

Dos Reales, Chinatown, Hot Wok, Pasha, World Harvest, El

independent international medical humanitarian organization that delivers emergency aid to people affected by armed con-



Andrew Serino/Prospectus

Torero, Arinrang, and Buffalo Wild Wings all donated food for the international buffet, a fundraiser for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), or Doctors Without Borders. A mere six-dollar donation bought a large plate of food, and the event raised over \$840 for MSF.

The ISA has been making donations to this group for about ten years. MSF is "an

flict, epidemics, natural or man-made disasters, or exclusion from health care in nearly 60 countries," according to its website.

"In emergencies and their aftermath, MSF provides essential health care, rehabilitates and runs hospitals and clinics, performs surgery, battles epidemics, carries out vaccination campaigns, operates feeding

centers for malnourished children, and offers mental health care. When needed, MSF also constructs wells and dispenses clean drinking water, and provides shelter materials like blankets and plastic sheeting."

Also contributing her time and talents to the cause was Zainab Susi, a mendhi artist, who raised about \$70 painting interested students with intricate designs using henna paste.

"The henna tattoo was the best part because they are so hard to find in small little Champaign," said Stephanie Yousef, who is a part of more student organizations than can possibly be listed here. "I think it was absolutely fantastic that everyone can get together in unity and share a part about themselves. And the food that was served was incredible!"

Hundreds of attendees browsed the tables representing more than 20 nations. Participating students, many wearing the traditional clothing of their native countries, visited each other at their tables and chatted with students sent from their ESL and English classes to see the amazing cultural diversity of Parkland.

"It was a blast seeing the students represent their countries; they put their heart and souls into this event," said Club Latino advisor Amber Landis. "It was a great day for everyone to learn more about global cultures and to connect with each other from many different perspectives! I've never seen African countries or Southeast Asian countries or Middle Eastern countries represented so well."

In addition to the tables showcasing various countries, student Ricardo Azambuja put together an informational table about global warming, complete with plants and a betta fish in a bowl. Nearby was a table piled high with fair trade goods from the local Walnut Street location of Ten Thousand Villages, one of the world's oldest and largest fair trade organizations.

Also scheduled were a Japanese martial arts demonstration with Kaizad Irani and Jeremiah Godby, quizzes testing global warming and international knowledge, children's story telling and a Brazilian capoeira presentation.

"The fashion show was one of

See **ISA** on page 10

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Fleet Foxes' "Sun Giant": ■ Seattle Neo-Folkies on the Rise

By **JASON HARDIMON**
WPCD Correspondent

On the first and title track of their Sun Giant EP, Fleet Foxes front-man Robin Pecknold sings without accompaniment, "What a life I lead in the summmer. What a life I lead in the spring." A few verses follow and then his haunting vocals trail off into an ambient melody while his mandolin drifts into the foreground. This stark introduction serves as a brilliant indicator that Robin Pecknold is the foundation of the Fleet Foxes sound. A sound that is fresh like a Pacific wind yet born out of respect and love for all facets of the American folk music tradition.

Pecknold and Fleet Foxes hail from Seattle Washington. Seattle is known to many as America's rainiest city and the birthplace of the 90s grunge movement—which Pecknold refers to as "mostly a press creation." Since the early days of Nirvana and Pearl Jam, the city has undergone a massive population expansion, which was facilitated by the emergence commercial mammoths such as Microsoft, Star-bucks, and Amazon. Now much of the area resembles the shiny homogeneous landscape of American Suburbia. In spite of this Pec-

knold asserts that, "I've lived in Seattle my whole life, and I don't think it's ever been this cool."

Well, he might be right... the list of artists who are currently being represented by Sub-Pop, The Pacific Northwest's premier record label, does look pretty stacked. Besides Fleet Foxes, a few of the names which adorn Sub Pop's artist list include: The Shins, Band of Horses, Flight of the Concorde, the Go! Team, the Helio Sequence, Iron and Wine, and the Postal Service.

Aside from geography another element that shaped the Fleet Foxes sound considerably was parental influence. "We grew up listening to the music of our parents...all those perennial 60s bands," Robin says. In addition to musical taste, Mr. and Mrs. Pecknold also provided Robin and Aja, his older sister, with their first acoustic guitars while Robin was still in his early years of high school. Upon receiving this gift, Robin took to music with ease and guster. He soon teamed up with best friend Skye Skjelset and the two began to craft original compositions. As their interest grew they began to forsake other obligations, including high school, in order to concentrate on songwriting.

A few years later the boys began to perform their com-

positions live as Fleet Foxes. As they progressed, they constantly wrote new compositions and scraped old ones until they found a few that seemed to fit.

of hype—a rare achievement for a young band which has only released two EPs thus far. In spite of all the talk, J Edward Keyes of Rolling Stone maga-

The full-length could prove us wrong, but the songs on their EP are so wan that they're almost airless."

I think that Keyes was definitely being more than a little ignorant and callous when he made this claim. After listening for myself, it occurred to me that, for Fleet Foxes, talent is not an issue. The musicianship on this album is superb. And as for the compositions, they are all certainly intelligent and interesting. The element of their sound that most pleasantly surprised me was the heavy incorporation of baroque era folk music, from which the American folk music tradition was shaped. This period folk music forms strong foundation upon which elements of later forms of folk music are applied in layers. Like the mandolins and "cottony" vocals of Appalachian bluegrass, the organs of gospel, and the electric guitar of 60s folk rock. Fleet Foxes are, in a way, shaping their own folk sound from the best parts of the tradition. This is an amazing creative concept and it should be recognized as such. While Keyes is right about the fact that this might not continue to catch on at the current pace, I think it's only a matter of time before Fleet Foxes reach their potential, assuming they continue to innovative and full of integrity.



Eventually, other musicians from the Seattle area joined them, including keyboardist Casey Westcott, Drummer Nick Peterson, and Bassist Christian Wargo.

The five tracks featured on Sun Giant have generated a lot

zine doubts weather they possess the ability to live up to the buzz surrounding these recordings. According to Keyes, "There's nothing specifically wrong with Fleet Foxes, but haven't we had enough of cottony falsetto and twinkling acoustic guitars?"

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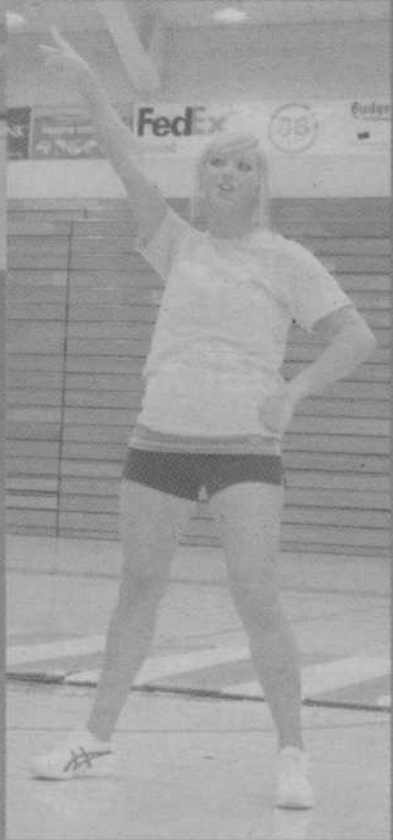
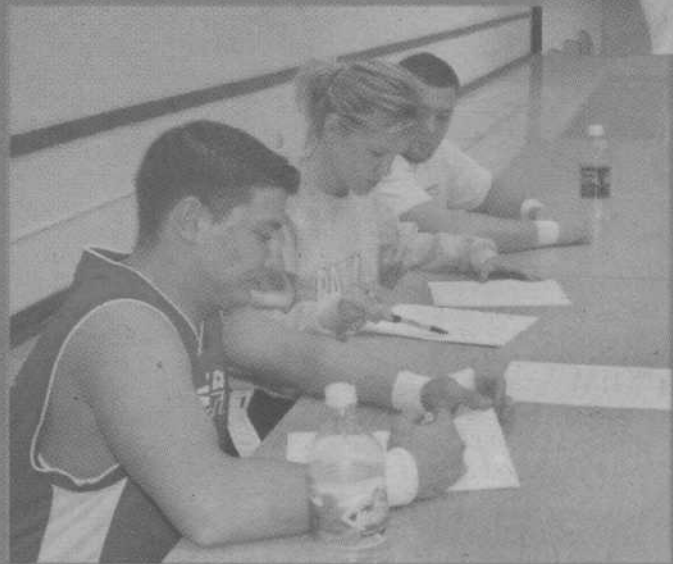
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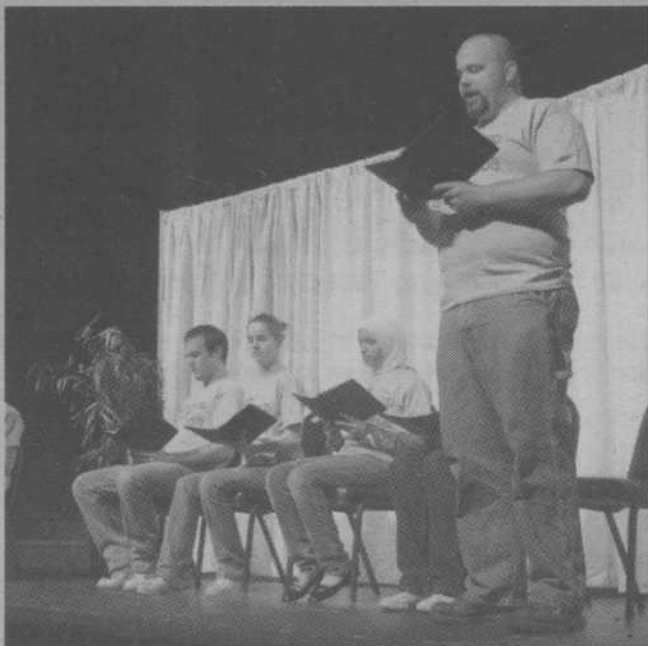


GO COBRAS! CHEERLEADING TRYOUTS 2008





Story Shop 2008
with Richard Peck



Photography by Briana Stodden

IRANI

continued from page 1

featured two weeks ago in the Prospectus.

Irani deserves any and every award that he gets, though. A Parkland faculty member for nearly 20 years, Irani simply knows Parkland. When he steps outside his office for a single minute Irani receives a handful of friendly greetings from his pupils and colleagues.

He fondly refers to his students as his “kids,” even though many of them have been as old as 92.

“I lead by example. I cannot be one of these guys who stands up on a soapbox and just yaks away. If I suggest that my students do something its either I’ve done that myself or am doing that. I continue to do that,” he said.

And Irani very well should feel like the big instructor on campus—he abandoned a successful corporate position to pursue his passion for teaching at Parkland. “Teaching, to me, is not a career. Its a lifestyle,” he said.

“I love Parkland because the students that come to us are not overtly biased. A lot come to us at the high school level so we are there to mold them from the beginning. Parkland allows us to do that,” he said.

Irani received \$1000 in professional development money from the ICCTA. He also gained college-wide recognition and was entered for consideration for the national award.

“I’m really gonna miss Kaizad,” one impending graduate was overheard telling her friend. But with his involvement in the community, chances are likely that students will run into Irani sooner or later.

[The Prospectus would like to thank Kaizad Irani for his endless support of our journalists and photographers. He has always taken the time to assist our office, and we congratulate him for his achievements.]

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The Obamapologist, Pt. 1:

By SHANE SWEARINGEN
Prospectus Staff Writer

By now, hopefully everyone has had the chance to digest Barack Obama’s comments on bitter small towners and blog their unique and compelling perspectives on the matter, but in case anyone might have missed it (and turns to a community college newspaper for political news), here are the much-dissected comments in full:

You go into some of these small towns in Pennsylvania, and like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for 25 years, and nothing’s replaced them. And they fell through the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration, and each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are gonna regenerate, and they have not.

And it’s not surprising then they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.

Predictably, the junior senator’s adversaries were quick to pounce, with John “My Wife Is A Hundred Million Dollar Beer Heiress” McCain calling him an “elitist,” and Hillary “I Grew Up On Pinochle And The American Dream (Under Sniper Fire)” Clinton bizarrely attacking the

patently obvious assertion that, yes, some people who live in small towns are bitter—before shifting gears to the more sensible (albeit profoundly ironic) “elitist” critique.

Elsewhere, Mickey Kaus wrote a scathing piece in Slate suggesting the comments were



delusional, arrogant and hypocritical. Nearly half the respondents to a CNN poll feel Obama’s comments reveal his “elitist” attitude. And Lou Dobbs suffered some kind of patriot-rage-fueled head-explosion (I imagine).

But for all the hysteria they’re

generating, the comments weren’t radically inaccurate. Not to bill myself as some kind of spokesperson, but I grew up in the rural Midwest, and from my standpoint the only thing the senator really got wrong was his basic contention that there’s some kind of causal relationship between economic hardship and regressive rural Midwestern culture—but then that’s not what the mainstream media is freaking out about.

Rather, the majority of outraged pundits are upset that Obama appears to be tacitly characterizing small town Midwesterners as ignorant, complacent bigots who need religion, guns and scapegoats to compensate for their personal shortcomings and cope with the bitterness of their lives, and vote Republican out of some combination of cultural backwardness and spite; hence the “elitist” tag.

But you know what? A lot of rural Midwesterners are EXACTLY like that.

I don’t know why this is outrageous or offensive: it’s true. I thought this was common knowledge? A blunter and more accurate version of Obama’s comments would have been, “There are a lot of slack-jawed yokels in this country who will vote against their own economic interests and their children’s futures just to satisfy their prejudices, faith and gun-lust; red-

necks LOVE to shoot stuff.”

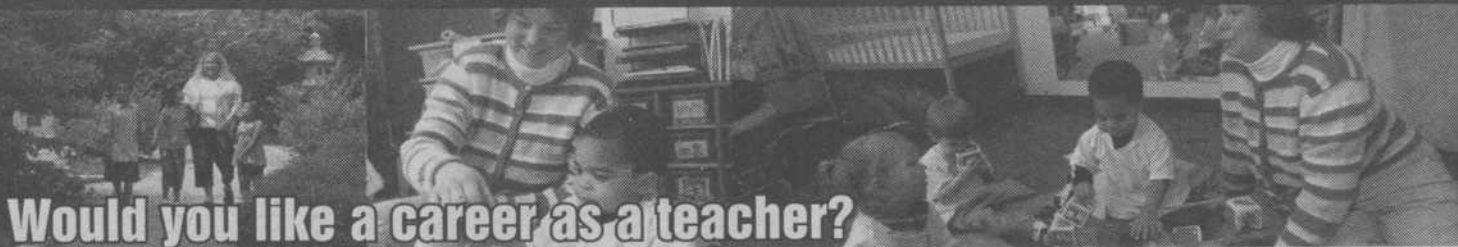
In a clumsy and comically sugar-coated way, Obama was explaining why a large segment of society votes the way it does, and why it won’t vote for him in particular; I don’t think that qualifies as “elitist.”

As has been relentlessly noted the past few days, Christianity and guns are a part of the fabric of rural Midwestern culture, and that’s inarguable. However, racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia are also a part of the fabric of rural Midwestern culture, and if anyone claims otherwise, then either they or I have been living in some sort of bizarro parallel rural Midwest.

For example, when I was in junior high, a kid in my class came to school dressed as a member of the Ku Klux Klan, and was punished by being SENT HOME EARLY; at a high school dance, a gay student was kicked out for bringing his boyfriend; when I was home over Christmas break just this past year, a ten year-old kid told me that he didn’t want Barack Obama to be president because he would “only help the black people.”

Yes, guns and Jesus are rural Midwestern traditions handed down from one generation to the next, but anyone who says bigotry and ignorance aren’t kidding themselves, and it shouldn’t be considered “elitist” to acknowledge that reality or have a problem with it, or even to explain it indirectly to a group of upper middle-class San Franciscans.

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THOM

continued from page 1

resources in and around the community and connect them with the student based on their individual needs.

Another quality that Lau says Thom possesses lies in the art of teaching students how to help themselves. "I think it's one of her particular gifts, is not to be that crutch for the student but to actually show the student how to handle the situation better next time," Lau said.

Lau also says that Thom has a good instinct of knowing whom to help. "Her kindness often is expressed in terms of being very firm, telling the student where they've crossed the line, sometimes telling the student, 'I'm not going to help you anymore because you don't want to be helped,'" Lau added.

Another reason why Lau nominated Thom is because she's a forward-thinking planner. "I think she also has achieved at a team level...she's able to help other people in the Center here to think things through by helping us become more systematic in how we help students. She always thinks several steps ahead," Lau said.

Thom has gained a lot of these experiences with these students partially because she was once one herself. "I see a lot of students who come in and have no idea what they want to do. I was the same," she said. "Don't be discouraged. It may take awhile to get to your dream job by you're learning as you go," she advised.

Finally, Lau added, "She's a personal inspiration to me to always remind me that the work we do is not just the paper stuff, not just chalking down how many numbers come in, but always a reminder that it is the individual student we need to help and that, I believe, is the satisfaction and she is always a reminder of that."

The Gold Award has humbled Thom. "When you feel like you're doing a good job and other people feel the same way, it's great to be awarded for this job because it's been the greatest job I've ever had," Thom said.

Thom is to receive \$750 for professional development, recognition from the Parkland College Board of Trustees and more.

[On behalf of Parkland College, the Prospectus congratulates Jan Thom for her leadership and excellence.]

ADAWI

continued from page 1

city of Illinois, I have no doubt that I was most fortunate to be one of Omar Adawi's students," said Joshua Lejedal, a graduate with degrees in construction design management and civil engineering.

"[He] tailored the class to the students' majors. I don't any other instructor that would go to all that effort," said an anonymous student via feedback from a class.

Adawi feels Parkland is a great place to work and is honored to be chosen from Parkland's many deserving staff members.

Adawi stands out from other nominees in his work with student assistance in various capacities. Adawi helps students in the tutoring program, assists tutors in their learning processes, and works with

other faculty in academic assessment in using technology and through classroom instruction.

Adawi hopes this award will not only represent his work, but also that of the mathematics department faculty who help and encourage many students through the tutoring programs.

"I'm hoping as times goes on the Center for Academic Success will be more well-known," said Adawi. He hopes that students will come to the center and make use of the tutoring programs available.

Professor Adawi will be receiving in-house recognition from Parkland. His name will be engraved on a plaque, he will travel to Austin, Texas and will receive a medallion during the excellence award ceremony, and he will receive \$1,000 for professional development. To learn more about the NISOD teaching excellence award visit www.nisod.org.

Newberry hero recognizes young writers

■ Parkland's "Story Shop" welcomes Richard Peck

By GAVIN DOW
Prospectus Staff Writer

Fifteen junior high school students were recognized on Saturday for excellent writing as part of Parkland's "Story Shop" program. The winners, their families, and their teachers were on hand to hear Richard Peck, who was awarded a Newberry Medal for 2001's *A Year Down Yonder*, speak about writing. These aspiring writers paid rapt attention as Peck, a 74-year-old native of Decatur, spoke about becoming a writer and the writing process. He also read aloud a short story, as well as part of the first chapter from an upcoming book.

After Peck spoke, the award winners came up on stage to receive their awards, plus a handshake from Peck.

Winners came from Unity Junior High (Tolono), Franklin Middle School (Champaign), St. Thomas More (Champaign), Villa Grove Junior High, Judah Christian School, and Campus Middle School (Urbana).

Peck's lecture was of great interest to the aspiring writers in the audience. He opened the talk with an exclamation: "There are writers in this room!" He argued in favor of starting to read—and be read to—at a young age. "They are the best defense we have against Game

Boys and gunfire." He also praised Mark Twain, saying "All American stories flow from *Huckleberry Finn*."

Peck stressed that, when writing stories, authors should always write with the readers in mind. "A story is not about the writer, a story is about the reader," he explained.

He praised the value of research, saying that, "Every book begins in the library in the hope that it will end there." He said that he didn't write about what he knew, but instead learned new things so that he could write about them. The most important thing, he told the audience, was that a character undergoes a transformation during the story. "If there is no change, there is no story."

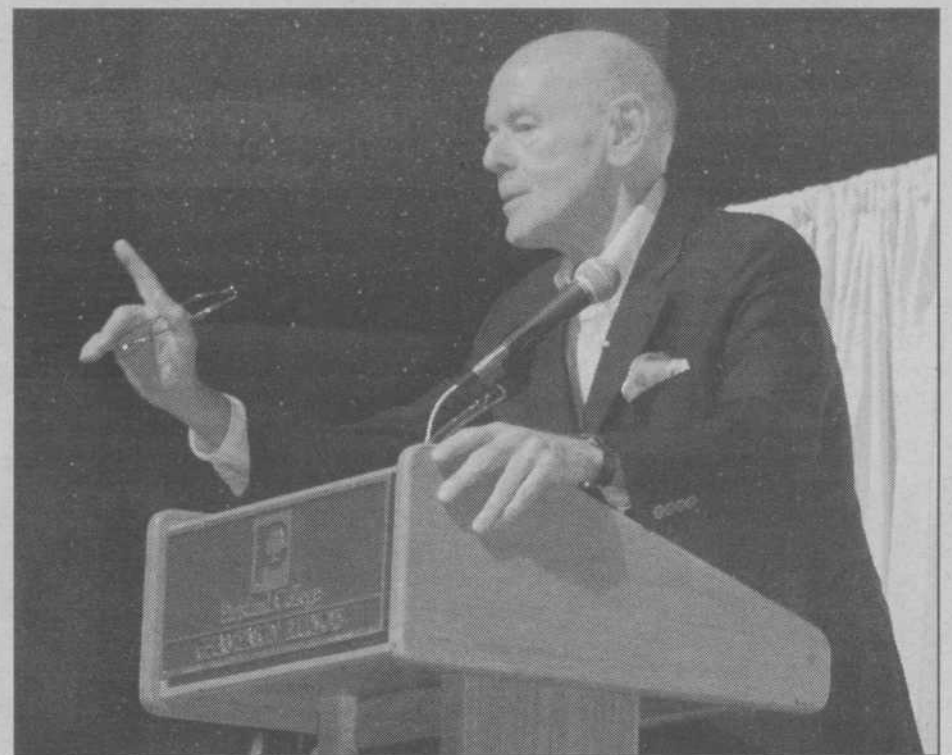
There were also moments of humor. Responding to claims that kids don't have the attention span anymore to spend hours and hours read, he said, "I wanted to be hyperactive too, but mother wouldn't let me!"

He also compared being a writer to being a Wal-Mart greeter: "There are no benefits, but you never have to retire."

To wrap up the ceremony, six Parkland students from Julie Eishar's SPE 101 class read and performed three of the award-winning stories, all with a theme of communication. One story presented a fictionalized account of the development

of the preamble to the constitution, and another featured a gerbil that learned how to talk. Following that, winners and guests mingled over coffee and choco-

ing the 1980s that was revived by Dorothy Voyles as part of the P-16 initiative that focuses on learning from the pre-kindergarten level through a bache-



Briana Stodden/Prospectus

late chip cookies, while Peck signed copies of several of his books.

Story Shop, the program at Parkland that sponsored the ceremony, is a program that existed at Parkland dur-

lor's degree. According to Voyles, it's an important program because it focuses on junior high students, whereas most similar programs are designed for elementary school students.

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PROSPECTUS
Thursday, April 17, 2008 — Page 10

■ For Sale

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ISA

continued from page 4

the nicest parts," said Kuykendall, called "Dr. Sue" by her students.

"There were more men in the show than usual, so that was nice...it's sometimes hard to convince the guys to participate, but a bunch of the African men got all dressed up to walk in the show."

When asked about her favorite part of the event, ISA secretary Titi Bamgboye immediately cried, "Nataly's dance!" Calling it "reggae belly dance", Club Latino member Nataly Bri-

ceno performed and later helped teach interested students how to salsa.

The ISA is already thinking about next year's International Cultures Fair, so be sure to contact them if you want to get involved.

The group meets every Thursday from noon to 1pm in room X223. You can also contact advisor Sue Kuykendall at 373-3728 or skuykendall@parkland.edu.

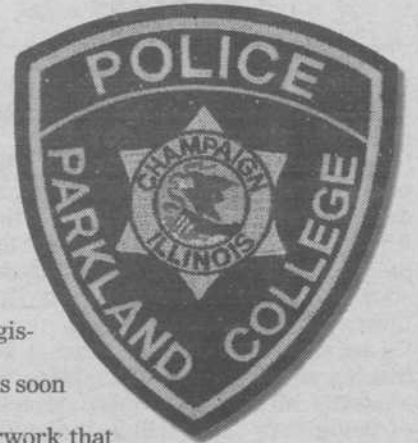
Anyone in the Parkland community is encouraged to join, not just international students, so stop by a meeting for interesting snacks and one of the friendliest groups on Parkland's campus.



Just so you know, safety is everyone's business

Identity Theft

Identity theft is a very serious problem in the US today. Statistics show that an identity is stolen every four seconds. Also, there are over ten million identity theft victims in the US alone. It can be very expensive and time consuming being the victim of identity theft. Here are some tips to help you avoid being a victim of identity theft.



- Place your name on the Do Not Call Registry. (www.donotcall.gov)
 - Remove your mail from your mailbox as soon as possible.
 - Shred or tear up any discarded paperwork that contains your personal information.
 - Do not leave your purse or wallet unattended for any reason.
 - Do not give out personal information in response to unsolicited offers by phone, mail and internet or in person.
 - Check your credit report at least once a year for any discrepancies.
 - Put your garbage out the day of pick up, as opposed to the night before.
 - Do not carry your social security card in your purse or wallet.
- If you follow these tips you have a much better chance of avoiding being a victim of identity theft.

Calling all Catholic students, faculty and staff!

Come find out about a new group to nurture the spirit and increase our love of scriptures and tradition.

An informational meeting will be held on Monday, April 28th from 12-12:50 in X-225. All are warmly invited to stop by and find out more.

For more information, contact Dr. Amy Penne, 353-2028 or apenne@parkland.edu.



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Weather Forecast

- Thursday Night:** Heavy rain likely. Mostly cloudy, low around 49.
- Friday:** Heavy rain likely. Mostly cloudy, high near 62.
- Friday Night:** Heavy rain likely. Cloudy, low around 48.
- Saturday:** A chance of showers. Cloudy, with a high near 62.
- Saturday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46.
- Sunday:** Partly sunny, with a high near 68.
- Sunday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 48.
- Monday:** Partly sunny, with a high near 72.
- Monday Night:** Heavy rain likely. Mostly cloudy, low around 49.
- Tuesday:** A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 71.

CrimeStoppers seeks assistance

This week, CrimeStoppers and Champaign Police Investigators are seeking information regarding multiple reports of criminal damage to property.

On Monday, April 7, residents at Town Center Apartments, located at 2401 North Neil Street, reported that tires had been cut on nine vehicles. The vehicles were parked in the Town Center apartment complex parking lot. One vehicle had all

four tires cut, and the other vehicles each had one tire cut.

If you have any information at all regarding this crime, please call



CrimeStoppers at (217) 373-TIPS or (217) 373-8477. Information can also be sent by anonymous web tip by going

to: www.champaign-countycrimestoppers.com.

The information you provide is confidential. You do not have to appear in court.

CrimeStoppers will pay a reward if the information you provide leads to an arrest for this crime. Cash rewards are also paid for information on other felony crimes or fugitives in the Champaign County area.

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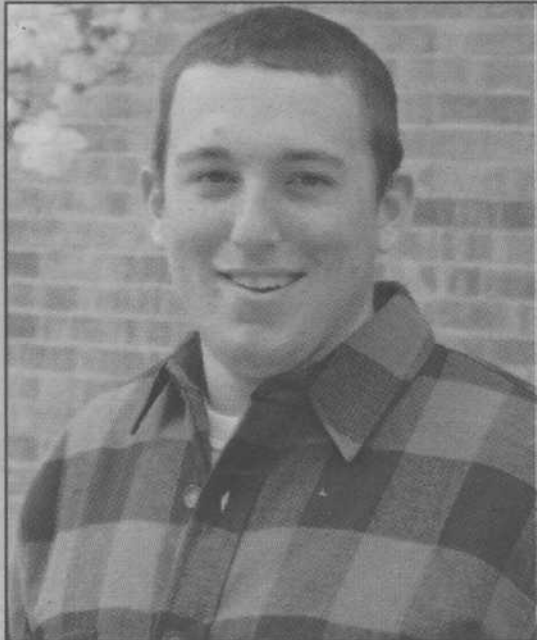
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Hites elected to distinguished post in agriculture



Press release

The 34th Annual Illinois Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization Conference delegates held the election of a new slate of state officers for 2008-2009. In addition to conducting business meetings and chapter and industry visits, the newly elected officers will represent and promote Illinois PAS at agricultural related functions throughout the state.

Parkland student Bryce Hites was elected as one of the three vice presidents of the state organization. An enthusiastic and involved PAS member, Bryce was also an active FFA member, where he served as the 2006-2007

Section 17 President, participated in the Washington Leadership Conference, and numerous other leadership development events. Bryce served as a student representative on the PAS board of directors this year. Bryce's goal for PAS is to increase the quality and participation in PAS members at all levels and also increase University membership in the organization. Bryce is from Mahomet and is a freshman in the agriculture transfer program at Parkland College. His plans are to transfer to Southern Illinois University to obtain a bachelor's degree in agriculture education and to become a high school agriculture teacher.

EARTH

continued from page 3

- Use the library!
- Replace your showerhead with an efficient, water-saving head. Chances are you'll even get better water pressure with the "massage" setting. Save sixty bucks a year.
- Bring a personal container for your coffee, water, juice, or other drinks. The same goes for your food, too. When you bring your lunch, do you use a washable container or do you use disposable bags and plasticware?
- Believe it or not, washing dishes by hand can be 50% worse than using dishwashing machines. If you're going to wash dishes by hand (for example, if you're a student with no choice), then fill up the basin, and only turn on the water again to rinse en masse.
- Drink water from the tap. Did you know that tap water has stricter federal standards for purity and chemical contaminants? Also, by utilizing tap water, you're avoiding those nasty water bottles, and studies were just released that those of you who think you're being green by reusing your plastic water bottles are just subjecting yourself to harmful bacteria. Get rid of the plastic bottles—if San Francisco can do it, so can you.
- Install aerators on your faucets. They cost less than a dollar, and can cut your water usage by

5-10%.

•Unplug the vampires! Here's an example: you plug in your cell phone to charge it, and you leave it plugged in after you noticed that it finished charging. You're still paying for electricity, and you probably have a lot more devices like that around and you don't know it. Your laptop, dustbuster, and many kitchen appliances suck needless energy. Know which ones cost you money, and take action.

Okay, so that may seem like a lot, but if you take only one suggestion per day, you are making giant steps towards lessening your eco footprint. And once you start feeling like a pro, there's another world out there for the devout. For instance, you can "green" your baby, your wedding, your pets, and even your sex life.

There is one problem for those of you who have made it through this entire article: these words are useless unless you practice them. And in today's society the easy road is sometimes the only road we see until it ends. We want instant gratification, and we want it now. But take heart, the best experiences only come from a sense of ownership and at least a little bit of labor.

That being said—go out and do something ecologically sound. And ultimately do it for you, because if you aren't looking out for yourself, then how on Earth are you going to take care

of, well, the Earth?

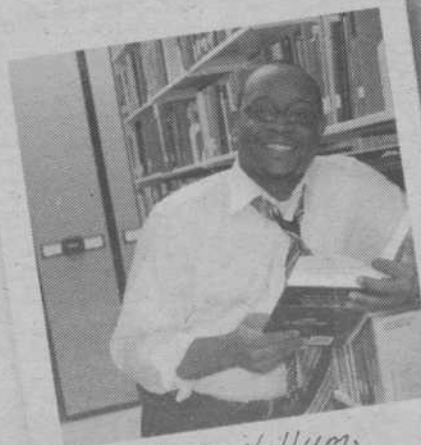
Want more tips? Visit these Web sites:

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There, no more excuses for you, or for me, or for this school. Write to the Prospectus and tell us how you're going green, or give us some more tips to publish to our readers. The best way to voice your opinion (and do it paperless!) is to go to www.prospectusnews.com, register, and write a letter to the editor using the link provided. Trust me, your letter will be read, and if you're insightful, or if you have a constructive comment, we'll print it online. Happy Earth Day.



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