

Palisades Views



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Professor to speak on energy

Professor Michael Shaw is the guest speaker for the October meeting of the Piasa Palisades Group. He will discuss the relationship between chemistry and electricity and the potential for it to transform our current energy paradigm.

“The technological fabric of our society is based on the manipulation of electricity,” Shaw said. “The intimate connection between electricity and chemistry ensures that responsible and sustainable technologies will require creative interdisciplinary efforts between chemists and engineers.

“The concept of ‘personal energy infrastructure’ has been recently proposed by researchers at MIT as a strategy to achieve long-term energy independence.”

Shaw’s talk will highlight the differences between batteries, fuel cells and solar cells as energy-storage and energy-

generating devices. Strategies for finding electricity-driven chemical transformations for rechargeable devices and for green manufacturing processes also will be discussed.

Shaw started his academic career in 1998 as an assistant professor of chemistry at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and

now is a full professor. He has won SIUE’s and Emerson’s Teaching Excellence Award and the 2011 Paul Simon Teacher-Scholar Award.

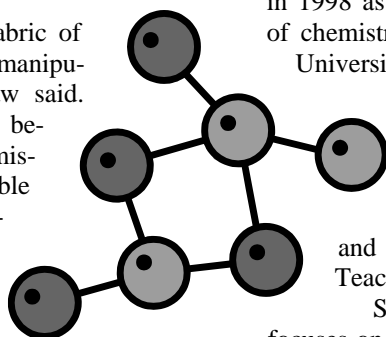
Shaw’s current research

focuses on “systems wherein carbon-carbon triple bonds (like acetylene) can be transformed into useful chemicals through electron-transfer events mediated by metal atoms.”

“The reactivity of the new compounds is unraveled through advanced electrochemical techniques, including new in-situ fiber-optic spectroelectrochemical techniques pioneered (in a lab) at SIUE,” he said.

So far, 37 students have benefited directly by contributing their efforts to this activity. Shaw’s research has been funded by the National Science Foundation with several major grants and by the Research Corporation for Science Advancement.

The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 10, at First Unitarian Church, 110 E. Third St. in Alton. People also are invited to join the speaker for dinner at 5:45 p.m. at Bosanova, 112. W. Third St. in Alton.



WEEKEND IN THE WOODS is Oct. 7-9



Be there or be square!

“Living” is a good read

**By Richard C. Keating
Group founder**

Environmentalist Bill McKibben published his book, “The End of Nature,” in 1989. It was the first widely read volume discussing its title theme.

I recently found “Living through the End of Nature,” courtesy of Borders’ going-out-of-business sale. It was written by Paul Wapner, a professor at American University.

The post-apocalyptic vision implied by both titles surely seems gloomy at first glance, but “Living” is a good read.

The basic premise is that the traditional vision of nature — embraced by Thoreau’s “In Wildness is the Preservation of the World” — is in need of a serious reality check.

Until recently, we used phrases such as “virgin forest” and “virgin landscape” to describe nature untouched by humanity. But even the North America of thousands of years ago was modified by human activity.

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C A L E N D A R

Saturday, Oct. 1 Edible and medicinal native plant workshop at Heartland Prairie, across Illinois 140 from Gordon Moore Park in Alton. Led by a master naturalist and master gardener. Hours are 9 to 11 a.m. For more information, call The Nature Institute at (618) 466-9930.

Saturday, Oct. 1 Canning and Dehydrating program at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Learn to preserve without refrigeration and enjoy safe, fresh, local and tasty foods all winter. The presenter is Annie Kelley. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. The cost is \$25. For more information, call (618) 466-5004 or visit www.lavistaelc.org.

Friday through Sunday, Oct. 7-9 Weekend in the Woods retreat at Pere Marquette State Park, near Grafton. Stay in rustic cabins, eat in the dining hall and participate in outdoor

activities such as hiking, canoeing, owl-watching and stargazing. Register by Oct. 3, if possible. For more information, call Teri Maddox at (618) 656-8132.

Saturday, Oct. 8 Basketweaving: Making a Bread Basket program at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Learn basic vocabulary and basketweaving techniques and leave with a completed basket and cloth liner. Hours are 1 to 4:30 p.m. The cost is \$25. For more information, call (618) 466-5004 or visit www.lavistaelc.org.

Saturday, Oct. 15 The Skill of Bread Baking program at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Learn about the many different kinds of bread and experience the joy of preparing and baking yeast bread from scratch. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. The cost is \$25. For

more information, call (618) 466-5004 or visit www.lavistaelc.org.

Friday, Oct. 21 Metro-east air quality and public health forum, sponsored by the Illinois Department of Transportation. Hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (food provided). To register, call Lisa Modrusic at (618) 692-7040, ext. 6089, or e-mail her at lamodrusic@co.madison.il.us.

Saturday, Oct. 22 Creepy Crawly and Nocturnal Creatures program at Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville as part of its Get Outdoors! series. Hours are 10 a.m. to noon. Free. For more information, call (618) 692-7578.

Saturday, Nov. 5 Healthy vegetarian harvest soups program at La Vista Ecological Learning Center in Godfrey. Learn to make soups that are good for your family and the planet. Commercially prepared soups commonly contain wheat, gluten, corn, soy, MSG and way too much sodium. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. The cost is \$25. For more information, call (618) 466-5004 or visit www.lavistaelc.org.

Saturday, Nov. 12 Awakening the Dreamer: Changing the Dream annual symposium at La Vista Ecological Learning Center. Develop a new dream that embraces change, justice, peace and ecological sustainability instead of consumerism and competition. Includes viewing inspirational DVDs and group interaction. Hours are 9 a.m. to noon (registration begins at 8:30 a.m.). The cost is \$15. For more information, call (618) 466-5004. Register at www.lavistaelc.org to members.

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Still, some of us continue to travel more than a thousand miles on occasion to experience being in “real nature,” whatever that is.

For today’s public at large, the protection of nature is somewhere behind the economy, war and terrorism on the list of important issues.

McKibben and Wapner have noted that the combined forces of a rising human population, advancing technology, urban sprawl, climate warming and the heightened capacity to exploit all habitats on earth have produced an indelible imprint on the planet — every square foot of it.

American environmentalism began as wilderness-oriented, and the

status of nature on this “wild” pedestal has remained a measure of progress for the movement.

Many related questions are considered in “Living.” “Should we just regroup to protect those elements that have not been destroyed?” “Should we stress social justice as an ultimate means of habitat protection?”

But eco-criticism asks, “Aren’t people part of nature?” If so, why worry? Can’t we just like the human-built world? Or is this the arrogance of humanism?

By reading this volume, you can’t help but become more thoughtful and pragmatic about what we think we’re doing.