1-30-2009

The Knothole, January 30th, 2009

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Student Body

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.esf.edu/knothole

Part of the Communication Commons, Creative Writing Commons, and the Environmental Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.esf.edu/knothole/416

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the College Archives at Digital Commons @ ESF. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Knothole by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ESF. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@esf.edu.
The "kinda-monthly" journal published by Stumpies, For Stumpies.
Hey Out There,

Campus seems a bit empty lately. Peers are spotted during classes only, a library run-in our only form of extracurricular interaction. With the quad covered in snow (and a gigantic octopus) this is the perfect time to get involved with school clubs, events, and volunteer work in our local community! No, keeping your couch and television company does not count as volunteering.

Liz Mix can hook you up with a chill place to help out, shoot her an e-mail at emix@esf.edu or call (315) 470 4909. If clubs are more your deal, check out the website http://www.esf.edu/students/calendar.asp and enjoy a creative outlet with Creative Minds or change our campus with Green Campus Initiative.

For Our Earth,
Rachel

---

The opinions expressed are those of the writers only and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the paper’s staff or anyone else affiliated with the college.

The Knothole reserves the right to edit submissions for length and content.

Meetings Tuesdays at 4 PM in Marshall B-9A (Basement)
By Hang Ryeol Na  
(P.D. student in Environmental and Natural Resources Policy)

On Saturday October 8th of this year, on the shore of Lake Ontario, environmental studies graduate students of Professor Jack Manno gathered at his residence. It was the second annual meeting between professor Mano and his graduate students.

I was delightfully surprised to learn how diverse we are. Not only are we geographically from around the globe, but also equally different in our current works and future dreams. Each of us have come from great distances; from Central New York and Washington D.C., to Jamaica, Bolivia, India, Korea and Kenya. In the midst of the variety of our projects, the common thread was sustainable development.

The night started off with a game of bocce ball followed by a potluck dinner. Before we started to eat, we all held each other’s hand and closed our eyes, thanking our Creator for food. Karen Mihalyi, one of the people who have done the ‘cooperative living’ with Professor Manno’s family, whispered at the end of the meal, “Thank you for loving the earth.” That one single remark resonated and still does in my mind. She was really grateful for each of us that we have chosen our major as Environmental Studies. She truly believes we can eventually create a better planet.

Professor Manno’s house silently revealed how he and his family have been living in a community. The pictures hanging on the wall show it all. His house has always been crowded with at least five or six people including his children. At this moment, he unusually lives in the house by himself.

Later I learned from Professor Manno that his living room, the very place where we had the dinner together with other cooperative-living individuals such as Karen Mihalyi and her partner Dik Cool was a birth place of rich cultural and social movements in Syracuse area. Dik Cool, who was having dinner right next to me has worked for the Syracuse Peace Council for more than 30 years and is now the founder and president of Syracuse Cultural Workers and also the CORA Foundation (Community Outreach and Resources for the Arts). In his everyday life, he contributes to raising awareness for environmental issues in the hope of making them an agenda for the greater social community. Karen Mihalyi is also a founder and director of a different outreach group, the Syracuse Community Choir which gathers to sing songs of peace and social justice.

What I learned from the meeting contains more than the cultural difference I sometimes feel on campus. The message I got is that for Professor Manno at least, respect for the ecosystem and harmony with the community for social development run across his lectures as well as his life. Actually, this makes the environmental studies program stand out against other disciplines; you can physically live what you learn. You may be able to interpret the power game by using the political theories learned from the political science coursework, but you can not live by it; however, you can live by the principles of sustainable development.

Now, why am I pursuing a Ph.D. in environmental and natural resources policy? Will my life be able to tell something about it, not only my words? How faithful are my words to my deeds in terms of environmental impact? These questions arise in my mind and are not easy to answer. But still, I push onward with hope.
ESF student Carlos Rosales sat down with James Johnson, the vice-president and co-founder of the Atheists, Agnostics, and Free-Thinkers Club, for a personal interview. Here, Johnson details the many ups and downs the club has gone through as it tried to get itself instituted in the Syracuse University system, as well as the philosophy behind wanting to create an atheist club on campus.

Carlos Rosales: Why did you decide to create a club for Atheists, Agnostics, and Free Thinkers on campus?

James Johnson: Atheists are considered the least trusted type of people because of all the past labels that have been placed upon us. Like, when some people think about “atheists,” they think that we sacrifice babies or something. The fact of the matter is that all of the negative connotations that we are given are not true. We are just free thinkers, and one of our goals is to try to get rid of such labels because we can do good things.

C: How did you begin everything?

J: I wanted to give back to the university community in some way and give involved in either a political or religious club, but couldn’t find one. So, I went on Facebook and saw that there was a Syracuse University Atheist group, which was created by the other co-founder; James Addoms. I asked him if he was interested in creating an atheist club on campus, and he was down with it. After that, he wrote the constitution and we went through a rough application process to create the club.

C: What were some of the difficulties that you went through as you tried to create this club at Syracuse University?

J: Well, when we first got started Hendricks Chapel turned us down because the group we wanted to create fell under “non-religious” groups. So, the only other choice was to go under as a political group and make the assumption that we have a governmental goal like activist for separation of church and state. It was a difficult process because our club has a distinct school of thought from most clubs and was difficult to place under a category. Which is a part of the process.

C: What did you think about the vandalism that some people do to your posters?

J: Well, it’s a sad thing that people have to resolve to that. But, if they think that tearing down the flyer will stop or slow us down then they have got another thing coming. I’ve dealt with it before, and when it happens it furthers our cause more than anything because we try to stand up against irrational behaviors like that. Rather, I would invite them to come to a meeting. We have something to offer both non-religious and religious people alike. Most beliefs are strengthened by debate, and if you think you are right about your belief than it’ll make it through the debate.

C: What are your meeting times and futures goals/plans?

J: We still haven’t set down times yet, but whoever is interested can check out the Syracuse University Atheist group on Facebook for further information. As far as goals go, we plant to host debates with other clubs and with professors of theology and philosophy. Also, we want to bring speakers like Richard Dawkins, author of “The Selfish Gene,” as well as advocate for separation of church and state and increase science in literacy.
We have all come to ESF for similar reasons. It is safe to say that one common goal for us all is to make the earth a better place by improving our environment. Everyone has different ideas and opinions of how and why this should be done, but how many of us are actually acting upon our ideas and living in a sustainable manner? Shouldn’t we all practice and live what we are learning and what we are hoping for others to do? Starting next school year, 821 Comstock Ave. will become the Eco-House, housing five ESF students with a passion for sharing and creating environmentally friendly ideas and practices with themselves and the community. The EcoHouse idea was born this year from the collaborated efforts of ESF Professor Robert Meyer, SU Lutheran Chaplain Gail Riina, the house’s landlord, and the students currently residing in house. This year will serve as the planning year for the EcoHouse, to lay down the foundations of the project. The ESF students living in the house meet biweekly with the professor and the chaplain to plan and share ideas. The main goal of the EcoHouse is to get the community more active in what they can do to help the environment and how they can live a more environmentally friendly lifestyle. The EcoHouse hopes to grow to a size greater than just one house. This is an opportunity that every ESF household should take advantage of. We are actively developing ideas to implement within our house for the project. We encourage others with an interest in an eco-friendly lifestyle to work with us so we can expand the project to the ESF/SU community and beyond.

For more information on the Eco-House or to receive an application to live at the EcoHouse next school year, please contact either Chaplain Riina at Hendricks Chapel or Dr. Meyer at Construction Management and Wood Products Engineering, Baker 222, ESF. If you would like a tour of the house and surrounding property, contact Brad DeFrees by email: bedefree@syr.edu.
By Katherine Mann ’09 & Joelle Chille ’11

The winter season is finally here; so in the midst of threatening snowstorms with the semester just beginning, there is no better place to go warm up, grab a cup of coffee and relax than 2nd Story bookstore. Nestled within the charm of Westcott Street, 2nd Story offers more than great books and coffee; the modest bookstore/coffeehouse now serves paninis, salads and pastries, and hosts live readings and acoustic performances as well.

In December, LeMoyne and ESF students gathered at 2nd Story to listen to their very own Patrick Lawler at a live reading. Opening for Lawler was Chris Fink, a short story writer who traveled from Wisconsin. The bookstore/coffeehouse was packed with students, sitting on coffee tables and lined up along the walls, all at attention and in laughs by Fink’s and Lawler’s performances.

2nd Story hosts acoustic performances weekly. The following is a review of one of 2nd Story’s recent performers. Combining recent indie folk with 70’s americana, David Lamb of Brown Bird wins your heart with his honey-laden voice and the soft twang of his acoustic guitar. Lamb strums you into remission with his quirky, poetic ramblings. This Warren, Rhode Island one man show is gaining steam, with his music now available on iTunes and Pandora. If you’re interested in the likes of Greg Brown-type-folk music or something a little bit more stimulating than Iron & Wine, Brown Bird is the band for you.

Find out about upcoming performances and all that 2nd Story has to offer at www.myspace.com/second_story.
Discuss Evolution vs. Intelligent Design

Tobias Letchworth’s Case

I am a firm believer in intelligent design. No, not that silly idea about a guy with a Santa beard on a cloud though, of course. I’m talking about Pastafarianism. You see, I am a member of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster. (http://www.venganza.org/). Now, I’m sure Dr. Brock made a thoughtful and compelling argument for evolution. But according to the Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, all evidence of evolution, including Tom Brady, was placed on earth by the his Noodliness, the Flying Spaghetti Monster, to test our faith. Now, I’m sure many of you are wondering, how come I’ve never seen this Flying Spaghetti Monster? Well, that’s because he’s invisible and undetectable (duh). Another question many of you may have is, “If the Flying Spaghetti Monster is so great, why do bad things still happen in the world?” Well, my pastafarian brothers, his noodly goodness created this world after a few too many drinks, resulting in our flawed universe. You may also be wondering what awaits you in the afterlife as a pastafarian. If you’re a good pastafarian, you’ll go to heaven. It’s pretty cool up there, they’ve got a beer volcano and a stripper factory. If you’re a bad pastafarian, you’ll go to hell. They’ve got a beer volcano, but the beer is totally skunked. Oh and the strippers have VD. Bad times. But don’t worry, you won’t end up there as long as you abide by the Eight I’d Really You Rather Didn’ts. Amen, brothers.

Tobias’ Rebuttal: First of all, your man crush on Tom Brady is creeping me out a little bit. Second, I think your understanding of evolution might be fundamentally flawed.

Brock Johnson’s Case

Hello everyone, my name is Dr. Brock Johnson. Today I will be giving a lecture entitled “Evolution Explained,” subtitled “Why Tom Brady is Better than You.” Now, I won’t bore you guys with some stupid story about some guy named Charles riding a beagle all over the globe, that’s just a little too far-fetched for Dr. Brock Johnson’s blood. What I will talk about is the biggest piece of evidence we have for evolution: Thomas Edward Brady, Jr., quarterback for the New England Patriots. Tom Brady is the pinnacle of human (AND quarterback) evolution. You see, Tom Brady has evolved a cannon for an arm, hawk-like field vision, rugged good looks, a supermodel girlfriend, and three Super Bowl rings. You may be thinking, Dr. Brock, how could evolution have created such a man. But what you don’t know is that before him, there were other men who could have been great NFL quarterbacks, if not for their shortcomings. Doug Flutie (too short). Michael Vick (too cruel to animals). Brock Johnson (tore both ACL’s driving a snowmobile under the influence last June). But these men were weeded out by natural selection. What we’re left with is the cream of the crop. And Tom Brady is the creamiest. As I’ve explained, the name of the game is survival of the fittest. So if you’ll excuse me, I have to inject my glutes with a steroid cocktail so that I can properly get my swell on at the gym before I ingest a healthy balance of alcohol and stimulants later tonight. In conclusion, Tom Brady: He’s the cat’s ass.

Brock’s Rebuttal: What? A flying pasta monster? Brock is offended!! Not only is your god completely ridiculous, he’s full of processed carbs and fat – that ain’t cool.
Now I know why they call it a poet’s moon.

It perks your marionette shoulders
To a point of starched enlightenment;
When its soulful journey traveling the clichéd course amid upset sidewalks comes to an end.
The breath is thrust From your shoulders Where trust is delayed yet another night.

I know why they call it A poet’s moon Because we’re the only ones Awakened by the doleful tune Of our dear Luna, Risen to celebrate the muffled city And its inherent beauty.

Oh, sleep is for the wicked...

by Joelle Chille
My Vision of the Future

The rail cars rust in the roots of sycamores and rushes,
Tractor trailers overturned, rotting in the marshes.
Aeroplanes don’t fly no more
their cargo is the flora,
Nature has reclaimed its throne
as the marvelous destroyer.
The boxes and the carriers
have lost their names in time,
They litter the cities and litter the fields,
so cryptic and divine.
Sometimes we seek their shelter,
we hide in their intestines;
Rain and clouds for days on end,
the sky has been infested.
The fire god, giver of heat,
he charms us with his warmth and meat,
The Earth awards and it engulfs and
we replace what we deplete.
The government is our will,
enforcement is our minds,
We’ve lost all sense of material,
we’ve lost all sense of time.
We’re pagans, anarchists,
and we’re mages and we’re shamans,
We feel the earth become us,
so we’ve everything in common.
She has born us, she sustains us,
in death, in life, in birth;
We are her keeper, she is ours,
the giving Mother Earth.
Each day we gather lunch,
we hunt breakfast and dinner,
Everyone is god now,
there are no saints or sinners.
So we get drunk and we fuck and
we kill and we get high,
The only one to pass the judgment is
me, myself, or I,
There is not any discipline,
there’s never a routine,
There is no right or wrong,
the only truth is existing.

By Greg Hawk

Time floats in front of me
On the calendar wall.
Clouds cool this air,
And me with it,
As a breeze floats in
My open window.
As these days run me by,
This life of mine
Takes root.
Maybe as time floats by,
I’ll root down,
Keep put.
Minutes float by,
days with them.
I stand still at times,
As I live my life;
still, the breeze blows news
Into my room, of how
Life keeps moving.

Poem by S.G.
By Sam Ramer

Do you ever try and mentally gather your world into one hand, maybe two? The trouble with this is that my world is too big these days. I’ve got plastics and silica from oceans away. Incense wafts and tea steeps from lands far and forests unknown. Regardless of the products’ identities, they are all touched by others hands, by other humans. Merging my world into theirs, creating a direct connection to dinner tables around which they eat. Obliging their jobs to my consumption, as they are subjected to the force that pays their wages, that feeds their children. Don’t mistake my intent; I’m glad to help another mammal eat. I’m just not as appreciative of the things we demand and the things that come attached. Happy meal toys, soap dishes, international conflict, genocide, invasive species, or Wal-Mart’s size.

On top of this societal quagmire, my income tax dollars are going to do exactly the opposite of feeding babies. Instead of paying wages and filling mouths, I’m paying for mines and bullets, for smokeless ammo and uranium tips. Seven hundred and fifty thousand people worth if you live in Iraq. Or, if a country a step behind the free market (e.g. Sierra Leone) gets involved in this trade, upheaval by faux revolutionary forces and child soldiers. Guns are the power while diamonds are the currency. Who cares how the workers are treated? Who cares where they’ve come from? Just get the diamonds, at all cost. Dig them all up and put them in rings so civilized brides can wear the souls of the men who died to get them.

An economist will tell you that these socio-politics of the free market are not his primary concern. The international free market is conceived to generate products at their lowest cost based on a country’s infrastructure. So if wages happen to be a little low or (non-existent) for a country, the capitalist is first concerned about his trade. If the country revolts or goods get destroyed it will interfere with his sales. It is therefore in his best interest to keep the country under wrap with whatever forces he has at his disposal. These small estates and their lords give up their sovereignty to the men who make demands for their country’s supplies.

Meanwhile, this global system seems to imply that we, United States citizens, must fill up our space mentally and physically with more and more things. Whether the things are useful or not, we fill up this space willingly. Happily redistributing our wealth to those at the top of the capitalist pyramid. Ignoring implications as our collective poverty builds. Meanwhile, the advertisements rain down to confine and define us into little molds. Are you sold? They seek to kill the grass roots so they can lay down astro-turf for easy maintenance and no unexpected dirt.

Since I am impotent and insignificant in this game of global change, I go back through things I’ve purchased and endorsed. To evaluate how my paper currency carries its force. It measures karma in inescapable decisions to buy and support, to coerce and extort. That is why I can say with little recourse that I have blood on my hands. I have supported war in the form of income tax and oil. I can say that there are children under my feet for I have endorsed slavery with cheap necessities in cloths and shoes. I can say that I have the world in my hands because our economy demands it through its origins of supply. Now, place around me all the stuff I’ve purchased, my plastic trinkets and shiny rocks and here I stand, blood red hands with contorted children’s faces underneath, surrounded by a pile of sand and rust as I try to keep the weight of the world balanced on my breast. It’s only a matter of time before that world crushes me underneath to exist eternally with the children at my feet. As slaves for a few powerful men to manipulate and deceive. For who is going to pull me out from underneath, who will be kind enough to help a man with bloodied hands? Some would say Jesus, Allah, or some other metaphysical relief. I’m hoping sustainability and free speech.
The Right Guy for the Job or Just the Best One?

By Justin Towers (‘11)

November 4th was probably the wildest Tuesday night at ESF in a long time. Students cheered, music blasted, inebriated hippies streaked down Westcott Street. A good time was had by all the Democratic faithful.

Rather that partying, however, I found myself at Dan Maffei’s election party in Liverpool, watching the giant television intently as battleground after battleground fell to Barack Obama. After eight long years the Bush regime was finally toppled and the environment was safe once more. I couldn’t help but ask myself though: Just how green is Barack Obama? Voting records show that McCain is no match for him in this area, that’s not really debatable. Many environmentalists seem to treat him like he’s the best thing since sliced bread (or at least Theodore Roosevelt). But is Obama really this environmental messiah, or just the lesser of two evils?

Looking at his voting record, Obama’s a tough man to beat. He’s voted pretty consistently in favor of environmentalism throughout his term as a U.S. senator. He did drop the ball on a couple of energy-related bills in 2005, but personally, I’ll cut him some slack. It was two votes on two days, and otherwise, he’s been pretty consistent.

I like giving people the benefit of the doubt when it comes to contradicting themselves on decisions made in the past. Viewpoints and ideals change over time; you can’t blame him for changing his mind on a decision he made four years ago. However, it’s one of his current positions that I find disconcerting.

Barack Obama has a largely pro-coal record and currently advocates for “clean coal technology.” Clean coal technology is a blanket term for processes designed to reduce emissions and environmental impacts from the combustion of coal. The term has been in more esoteric use for years, usually referring to less advanced processes for impact reduction. Currently, however, it is popularly used to describe the processes which trap carbon emissions and air pollutants before they’re released into the atmosphere.

On the surface, this seems like a great idea. It would allow us to burn coal, a resource with far more longevity than petroleum, without severely damaging the environment, right? Obama supports subsidies for this technology and its use as a tool to reduce global warming. However, the term clean coal is very misleading. The fact is that coal in and of itself is an environmental nightmare.

An early attempt at clean coal technology was the use of low-sulfur coal, a resource prevalent in Appalachia. There, shaft mining for coal has been on the decline for decades as it’s gradually replaced by surface mining. Surface mining has met opposition from locals and environmentalists alike since its inception. Activists have explored every tactic from peaceful protest to domestic terrorism. They were allowed one consolation prize in 1977 with the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, which accomplishes something somewhere between loose regulation and absolutely nothing.

People who think this sounds like another petty environmental qualm probably don’t know what one of the most popular surface mining techniques in the coal-rich Appalachians is. It’s called mountaintop removal mining and it works on the premise that it’s okay to blow 1500 feet off of the top of a mountain and collect the coal beneath. Anything that’s not coal ends up in valley fills, which obstruct stream flow, destroying entire ecosystems. Children and adults alike in neighboring villages end up with respiratory conditions from airborne coal dust. On top of that, valley fills have been known to burst, flooding entire towns in the aftermath.

To me, the moral and environmental implications of coal extraction are mind-boggling. But, overall, I really can’t knock Barack Obama too badly. He’s a busy man, and while controversial, the issue of clean-coal technology probably isn’t something he thinks about every waking moment. In comparison, his election is a step in the right direction for the environment. He’s voted green for the vast majority of his career and his positions reflect that. However, I have to conclude that Barack Obama is more the lesser of two evils than anything else.

Agree? Disagree? Get the facts on President Obama’s environmental agenda in our next issue!