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The Knothole, February 13, 2009

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Student Body

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Hey All,

I am sick. Not my-throat-is-kinda-scratchy sick, but I can’t move from my bed, I’ll get into an accident if I drive sick. My housemates have already fallen ill this season, and I really should have seen it coming. Needless to say, when my nose started to run, I did not have running sneakers on to catch it. There was not one ‘cold & flu’ remedy in my entire house.

Many college students have surely been caught in this predicament. In our parents’ homes, we could stumble to the medicine cabinet and chug whichever color liquid Doctor Mom prescribed. Now, we’re young adults with empty medicine cabinets (except for your housemate’s Proactive and a mystery ointment).

So, when it comes to buying some medicines, which store are you headed for? I don’t know about you, but I was raised in a community where driving to CVS, Rite Aid, or Eckerd to pick up some hard hitting drugs was definitely the norm. It is time, however, to break out of these old habits.

You, Ms./Mr. Independent, are in charge of which businesses you support and what chemicals you put into your body. This winter, instead of heading to a pharmacy, I hit up everyone’s favorite local metaphysics bookstore, Seven Rays. There, I found essential oils to help me ‘breathe easy’ and delicious tea packed with vitamin C. My sinuses and conscious are already feeling better!

For Our Earth,
Rachel

Letter from the Editor

Cheap Spring Break?! 

SUOC (Syracuse University Outing Club) goes to West Virginia!! You should TOO!!!!

Go caving, rock climbing, kayaking, hiking, mountain biking for less than $175 – That includes lodging and transportation!!!

Informational meeting
TUESDAY, February 18th 7:30 p.m.
107 Hall of Languages

Cheap Spring Break?!
When people hear the word “change”, they immediately think of President Barack Obama. However, they tend to overlook the significant events that have been occurring in the New York State Government. David Paterson is the State’s first African-American and legally blind Governor. The Democratic Party has the majority in the Senate for the first significant time since the 1930s. Kirsten Gillibrand has filled Hilary Clinton’s seat in the Senate. Also, State Senator Malcolm Smith was sworn in as the first African-American Senate majority leader. The states’ fiscal crisis has not received the attention that it needs. We are currently facing a $15 billion budget deficit which has resulted in tuition increases, environmental program cuts, and government hiring freezes.

Currently, the elected officials in Albany are working through the budget and attempting to get the state back on track. There is at least one measure in the otherwise dismal state budget which deserves all of our support. The expanded Bottle Bill (commonly referred to as the “Bigger Better Bottle Bill”) was proposed by Governor Paterson in his 2009-2010 executive budget. The expanded Bottle Bill expands the current law to include deposits on non-carbonated beverage containers such as water bottles, sports drinks, and ice-tea. The proposal also includes routing the unclaimed deposits back to the state.

The original Bottle Bill was adopted in 1982. It places a five-cent deposit on carbonated beverage containers which are paid when a consumer purchases a beverage. The deposit is then redeemed when the consumer returns the containers. Since its adoption, containers covered by the Bottle Bill have had a redemption rate of nearly 70%. According to the Department of Environmental Conservation (D.E.C.) over 94 billion containers have been returned and recycled.

The Bottle Bill has undoubtedly been New York State’s most successful recycling program and now it is crucial that the state upgrades it. When the Bottle Bill was passed, non-carbonated beverages did not make up a significant portion of the beverage market. Recent data suggests that they currently make up around one-third of all beverage sales. These beverage containers are a major source of litter on our beaches and in our neighborhoods partly due to the failure of curbside recycling.

Curbside recycling is not enough. Individuals tend to consume non-carbonated beverages away from their homes and out of reach of curbside containers. The Bottle Bill hasn’t and won’t replace curbside recycling. Instead, it will complement it, increasing our recycling rate and cleaning our neighborhoods and environment. An example of this can be seen right here in Onondaga County.

Onondaga County has a nationally recognized recycling program and yet it still struggles with recycling water and sports drink containers. A report released in 2005 by the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) showed that nearly 80% of Soda bottles were recycled in comparison to only 16% of water bottles. This trend holds true with aluminum cans. The Bottle Bill has also been effective with glass which has a negative value as a part of the curbside program. Glass with different thicknesses, strengths, and tints, are quickly smashed and mixed, making them useless. Glass has value when kept intact through the Bottle Bill.

The expanded Bottle Bill also routes the unclaimed deposits to the state. The original Bottle Bill is silent about the unclaimed deposits. It does not state who receives the unclaimed deposits and traditionally the beverage companies have kept them. The beverage companies keep an estimate $144 million a year in unclaimed deposits which will potentially surpass $218 million when the Bigger Better Bottle Bill is passed. How can the elected officials in Albany allow the beverage companies to keep this money, when they are asking us all for “shared sacrifice?” Three independent polls show that over 80% of voters in New York favor routing the unclaimed deposits back to the state.

The prospect of passing the expanded Bottle Bill this year is greater than in previous years but more must be done. The Assembly passed the expanded Bottle Bill three out of the last four years but it was stopped in the Senate. D.E.C. Commissioner Pete Grannis has been instrumental in expressing support for the Bottle Bill. On the 21st of January, he held a press conference with President Murphy in Bray Hall urging support for the “Bigger Better Bottle Bill”. We must answer his call and take action by contacting our local Senators Valesky, Aubertine, and DeFrancisco, and urge them to support the “Bigger Better Bottle Bill”.

by Brian Bishop (’10)
How many times have you walked along a trail or a road and looked down only to find burrs covering the bottom of your pants? Too many times I’m guessing, but did you know the plant that produces those pesky burrs is actually the holder of many medicinal properties? Burdock, or Arctium lappa for you botanists, is a disturbance species found on roadsides and most anywhere with damp ground. You have probably seen this plant on walks many times; with its huge heart shaped lower leaves and those sticky burrs, it’s hard to miss. The roots, primarily from first year’s growth, are the part of burdock that is most commonly used, but the leaves and fruits are also beneficial. Burdock is a plant that one should take regularly to stay healthy. It is one of the most powerful blood purifiers and provides support for the liver, blood, and immune system, by removing toxins. The roots are rich in manganese, zinc, copper, iron, Vitamins B-1, B-6, B-12, E, and polyacetylenes, which have anti-microbial properties. The best time to gather the roots is in July, when they are fresh. The first year’s growth is marked by its short extensions of rosette leaves. They can be eaten when fresh, having a taste similar to artichoke hearts, or they can be dried for use in teas. For your daily brew, make a tea by boiling some cut up root. Since they are so hardy and thick, the roots must be boiled in order for the compounds to release into the water. The first cooling will produce a blue color, and you can add more water for another batch until it loses the color. The tea has a sweet flavor, so enjoy alone or with additions such as honey or even a bag of your favorite tea leaves, and soon you will be on your way to eternal life! Oh wait, I wasn’t supposed to tell you that. For those of you who know Dr. Kimmerer, our resident moss expert and teacher of courses such as Field Ethnobotany and Plants and Culture, you better believe she keeps a jar of burdock root in her kitchen and drinks the tea daily. Hopefully next time you find yourself knee deep in burrs, you will thank this wonderful plant for its bountiful gifts and begin to use them for yourself.

By Molly Foley

The Daily Orange, walking along Euclid and the side streets for hours looking for signs and calling numbers, finding flyers on campus, and searching online.; The process of finding a college apartment can be tedious, time consuming, and stressful. Whether it is your first college apartment or your last, the decision could make or break your next school semester. The Syracuse area in particular makes this task even more challenging and impossible! The apartments get taken up like free beer would, if such an object existed. The apartment seeker must be on the ball and get out in search of the perfect apartment early in the fall before they are all spoken for. But how does a first time apartment seeker know the good from the bad? Well, it’s taken me three different apartments to discover the ins and outs of the business, but I finally have compiled a few important factors to always look into before signing anything. Also, who are the landlords to trust and those to fear?

Tip #1: Locks are one of the most important features of a new apartment. If you wind up with a less than perfect apartment, at least you have good locks that you can trust and that can provide the peace of mind that someone isn’t going to come in and steal your possessions. Ask the landlord the last time the locks were changed and if he/she has received all of the keys from past tenants. That way, you know that you and your roommates will be the only ones that can get in with a key. This tip may seem trivial, but trust me from experience. I know that the last thing you want is random people coming in and out of your apartment with a key that they had from last year! And take note of whether the doors lock behind you...it gets pretty cold in ‘Cuse without having to wait outside for someone to get home and let you in!
Last week’s USA meeting was a difficult one. Cariann Quick, our wonderful president, delivered some less than desirable news. The governor, David Paterson, and the NYS legislature have decided to take 90% of the SUNY tuition increase for state purposes. This means that the tuition increase meant to help the colleges in this difficult economic time will never reach ESF’s hands. In other, less disenchanting news, Cariann announced that I, Rebecca Masters, have been appointed Marketing and Recruitment Chair.

If you are planning to run for USA office, USA Vice President Meng Lin would like to remind you that letters of intent are due by March 6th and should be sent to Shaina Gerstenslager (srgerste@syr.edu). Treasurer Rosalia Lucero reported $3,150 presently available in the co-sponsorship account, and $1,300 in the mixer account. Programming Co-Chairs Rose Dillman and Kayla Miloy announced the next TG, February 13th at 4:30 in Nifkin Lounge, hosted by Alpha Xi Sigma, and also announced the forming of the Spring Banquet: planning committee and the theme of the banquet; “A Mad Hatter Tea Party.” If you are interested in helping to plan the Spring Banquet, they meet on Wednesdays at 4:45p.m on the Moon Couches. Junior Class Chair Kelly Wu announced that she will be selecting faculty, staff, and advisor awards for the banquet, as well as choosing recipients for the Robin Hood Oak Award and needs your help in deciding! Sophomore Class Chair Kieran Siao has begun planning for Earth Week, and needs your submissions for the T-shirt and tote bag designs by February 27th.

The Earth Week committee meets every Sunday at 3p.m. on the Moon couches. Steve Nichols, Freshman Class Chair, is currently planning the Wanakena Winter Weekend for February 27th --March 1st; the tickets will be $10. I, as Marketing and Recruitment Chair, want to remind people about this week’s TG in Nifkin Lounge and invite you to check out the website, it has been revamped a touch! Advisor Leah Flynn is looking for people to participate in the Heart Walk, you can register at www.syracuseheartwalk.org. Also, she met with the transition committee for the Learning Communities move next fall. As some of you may know, the ESF LC’s will be moving to the SkyHalls next year. She came away from the meeting very confident that it will be a smooth transition and that our LC will be very comfortable in the SkyHalls.

USA meets every Wed. at 5:15 in the Moon Conference Room

CHECK USA OUT ONLINE: http://www.freewebs.com/efusa
OR from the ESF main page go to: home >> students >> activities >> USA

Upcoming Syracuse EVENTS:

- Darwinian medicine and the Genesis of Organic Natural Medicines
  When: Feb 17 @ 7:30 pm; Location: Hendrick’s Chapel
- Ice Skating at Clinton Square
  When: Monday-Thursday 11am-8pm; Friday and School Vacations 11am-10pm; Sunday 10am-8pm
- Downtown Dining Week - Restaurants throughout downtown Syracuse offer three courses for just $25!
  Location: Participating Downtown Restaurants
- Garth Fagan Dance - Pulse Performing Arts Series is proud to present Rochester based Garth Fagan Dance in celebration of Black History Month!
  When: Feb 12, 8:00pm – 12:00 aM, call 315-443-2718
  Location: Syracuse University, 215 University Place.
  Cost: $5 SU students, $15 faculty, staff, alumni, $20 general admission
Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat; add onions, chilies and gingers. Stir while cooking for about 3 minutes or until golden.

2. Stir in curry paste, mustard seeds and turmeric. Stir while cooking for two minutes or until fragrant. Add squash and continue to stir and cook for 5 minutes or until the squash is coated in curry.

3. Slowly add the coconut milk and bring to a boil. Add the sugar, reduce the heat and simmer uncovered for an hour, or until the dish is dry and sticky. Serve over brown rice.
By Jessica Rohloff

So, we have a new president. A progressive, no holds barred politician who is a bastion for change and a firm believer in exploring alternatives to the status quo. This is an exciting time for those among us who have felt jilted by previous administrations that seemed only concerned with securing oil interests and promoting the agenda of the corporate world. Not only is Obama the first African American president in the history of the United States, but he is also the first president in quite some time who has shown a real interest in promoting environmental initiatives. This is music to the ears of many ESF students who have been waiting for a voice at the highest level of government that represents their concerns. What can environmentalists expect from Obama? How will this politician’s progressive ideologies play out in the real world?

Let’s first take a look at the environmental initiatives that Obama proposed on the campaign trail. On October 8th, 2007, Obama gave his speech on Real Leadership for a Clean Energy Future. It presented his position on global warming and the dependence of this nation on foreign oil. Highlights from the speech included a proposed $150 billion dollar investment over the next ten years to develop and deploy climate friendly energy supplies, a time limit to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and the implementation of a cap and trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. Obama also wants to reduce the total energy output of the nation by 50%, reduce our oil consumption by 35%, and initiate an international global warming partnership, all by the year 2030. All of this would be in effort to make the United States more of a leader in the battle with combat climate change.

After this speech, Obama and Biden fleshed out the ideas put forth on October 8th and came up with a very aggressive initiative called the New Energy Plan for America. The plan outlined more details about how the candidates would bring about the changes Obama had talked about. In essence, the plan would create 5 million green jobs by putting 1 million American made plug in hybrid cars on the road, and ensuring that 25% of the nation’s energy would come from renewable sources.

All of these propositions sound very optimistic and ambitious, but I think we’ve all seen our share of dog and pony shows in the political arena and it will take a bit more than smiles, crafty slogans, and hints of change on the horizon to win over the hordes of environmentally conscientious citizens who have been waiting for their day in the sun. So, this leads us to our next query: ‘What has Obama done for us lately?’

Well rest easy, Stumpies, Obama hasn’t just been talking the talk since inauguration day. He has already taken strides to improve the standard for vehicle emissions in this country. Just a few days after entering office, Obama directed the EPA to “reconsider an application by California and thirteen other states to set stricter limits on greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks, opening the way for tighter fuel efficiency standards nationwide” (Walsh). The EPA under the Bush administration denied California’s request repeatedly, so this marks a victory for states who believe that the federal Clean Air Act just ain’t good enough. Obama’s directive will force the EPA regulators to re-examine California’s argument. It’s expected that the case will be decided in the state’s favor (Hurst).

Obama wasn’t done there. He has frozen a number of Bush’s ‘last minute’ environmental regulations in their tracks. Before he left office, Bush prematurely pushed to strip the gray wolf of its endangered status in the Rockies and the Midwest mere decades after the species had been pushed to the brink of extinction. Obama put a stop to this until it can be determined what kind of impact the delisting would have on the wolves’ population (Tankersley).

In conjunction with these efforts, he has also halted a pair of controversial air quality rules from being implemented. These rules would have allowed for greater amounts of industrial pollution as well as a lack of regulations for greenhouse gas emissions from oil refineries (Tankersley). So, as we can see, our current president is not wasting any time when it comes to matters of environmental concern. “The days of Washington dragging its heels are over. My administration will not deny facts. We will be guided by them,” Obama stated on January 26th during a ceremony to announce to climate and energy change initiatives.

The track record has begun. We’ve seen our ‘chosen one’ in action and so far, he hasn’t let us down. Even while staring down the barrel of an economic crisis, Obama did not turn his back on Mother Earth. This ability to multi-task is a refreshing quality given the cursory treatment environmental issues have received under previous administrations. But will President Obama continue to live up to his promises? At this point, he has given us every reason to believe that he will.

Please visit our website: www.esf.edu/org/knothole for references cited in this article!
Rising Sea Levels around India

Rising sea levels are affecting India’s largest river, the Ganges. The salt water is reaching the water table of the river and threatening its ecosystem. There are major concerns that it will salinate the groundwater, which in turn will affect the agricultural land, making it barren and unusable.

Car Dealerships
Concerned for Future

President Obama’s new objective to change cars’ gas mileage is putting carmakers under pressure. Billions of dollars are going to be invested in order for cars to meet new standards. Car dealerships hope that higher prices and fewer choices won’t deter people away from the dealerships. New transmissions, engines, improved tires, more efficient air conditioning, and body paint are all part of the new energy policy to help reduce greenhouse gases released by cars.

Mercury Content
in High Fructose Corn Syrup

The common sugar substitute High Fructose Corn Syrup has been found to have traces of mercury. HFCS is in nearly all food products and has become a cheap substitute for sugar. Oddly enough, recent studies have shown that the early stages of production of High Fructose Corn Syrup involve mercury presence. Since mercury has been found to be toxic in all forms, IATP’s David Wallinga called for immediate changes in the manufacturing process to stop the avoidable contamination.
A Night Out in Syracuse

By Amy Labrosa

Recently turned 21? Looking for something new to do? Try Chuck’s Café on South Crouse Avenue in the ally parallel to Marshall Street. Chuck’s is a typical college bar that includes pool tables, great bar food, TVs with sports games, cheap drinks, and lots of college students. The atmosphere can vary depending on the night of the week you go. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights can get very crowded, so get there early so you can stake out a table or a spot at the bar. Sunday through Wednesday, though, the atmosphere is pretty low key (unless there is a ‘Cuse game on). Chuck’s is pretty quiet when people start losing their coin flips at “Flip Night” at Faegan’s. The food is surprisingly very good, and the average price for an entree is around $5.00. Food choices range from meals such as burgers, chicken bread pizzas, to snack items like soft pretzels, nachos, French fries, wings, etc. You can either dine in or call the order in and get take out. Be cause of recent bar raids in the campus area, they are very strict with IDs, and I would suggest bringing some form of backup. The dress can vary depending on the night and the crowd of people there. On game nights people are usually dressed in ‘Cuse gear to show their support. On weekend nights, some girls like to really dress up; but because Chuck’s is so big and there are so many people, you could get away with wearing whatever you wanted. For you smokers out there, you get a stamp on your hand when you enter the bar. This way, if you leave to go out for a smoke, you can get back in.

Specials:

Sunday: $.25 wing night
Monday: $1.50 Domestic Drafts
Tuesday: $1.50 Domestic Bottles
Wednesday: $2 Shots
Thursday: $1.50 Domestic Bottles
Friday: $3.50 Pitchers of Miller Lite

Happy cat is happy...also probably drunk
My eyelids depart from their
Resting places
As the day takes off.

My two feet, weighed down
with
Trepidation,
Shuffle towards the door,
The hinges whining as I pull.

Once more, I find myself
Gazing apprehensively;
Head-to-head with the bit-
ter,
Dark cold so common of the
Still, brisk morning world.

I impatiently wait
For the sun’s rays to
surmount my pace,
Giving warmth, giving
strength;
Climbing the stairs,
At a faster pace than
My slow morning self.

Until then,
Under my own steam
through throes of sleeping
faces,
I shuffle
through the darkness
Anticipating the new dawn.

By S.G.
Dear ESF community,

Dr. Maynard and I would like to give you an update on the transgenic and control American elm trees planted in front of Moon Library. They are still doing great! This summer alone, they have grown between 2.1 to 6.3 feet in height. The tallest tree is currently 24 ft in height. Not bad for 4 growing seasons. Again we would like to thank Dr. Phil Craul for designing the excellent soil mixture and Howard Bruse and his hard working crew who prepared and help maintain the site. You will notice that we removed the center tree from each side because of crowding. Now that the leaves are gone, you will notice one tree with the center missing and another with an unusual bend. Both of these were caused by wind damage. One other tree looks a bit shabby thanks to our library mascot, the woodchuck. Otherwise the trees are very healthy.

The elm research has expanded this year with the help of Don Leopold who allowed us to start a pilot project at the Solvay waste beds. There we will determine if American elm trees can help with the restoration of these fields.

Again, we would like to thank the campus community for supporting this American elm restoration project. We are also beginning to plant transgenic American chestnut in the field and hope to someday place a demonstration plot of these trees on campus for your observation.

Sincerely,

Bill Powell & Chuck Maynard
TG!

Friday, February 13th in Nifkin Lounge
4:30 PM

Free Food and Beverage - Bring Your ID

Brought to you by:
Alpha Xi Sigma & USA … and your Student Fee!

no glass!

-Bring your mug-

Ecologue
ESF's only creative journal
Submit your:
Poetry
Short Stories
Photography
Artwork
Essays to rtmaster@syr.edu

The Knothole
is on the web
(in color!)

www.esf.edu/org/knothole