Letter from the Editor

Ello Greens,

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS THIS FRIDAY OCTOBER 8TH. Forms are available in 110 Bray through Heather Rice, ESF’s Senior Counselor. We are fast approaching November 2nd, so please, get your ducks in a row this week. If you are not registered, get live, love and learn in our unique Syracuse community, consider being an active participant! Voting in this year’s election is one of the many ways to be a positive ripple in your community. As environmentally aware young people I encourage you to learn more about Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins, who is running for Governor this election. (www.howiehawkins.com) His 2010 campaign platform echoes many of the values we support as students at ESF. Howie is for a BAN on Hydrofracking, because he recognizes that a moratorium only treats the symptom not the problem. Howie is also for a sustainable green economy and renewable energy investments—things you won’t see represented in the campaigns of Democrats and Republicans. In addition, Howie is for FREE SUNY TUITION! So here’s the deal, vote for whoever candidate you believe is worthy. Just make sure you vote. And more importantly, before you vote, UNDERSTAND your options.

Until next time stumps...

Keep it classy,
Rose Dillman
Editor-in-Chief
esfknothole@gmail.com

Great for your Resume! Earn CPR Certification!
And I get a FREE WATCH!?
Contact hlrice@esf.edu for details.

Red Watch Band was created after the death of the son of Stony Brook University’s past college President. It was determined the student died of alcohol poisoning. The student’s friends did what many of us have done when a friend has had too much to drink: brought them to their home and put them in bed so they can “sleep it off”. Unfortunately, what friends didn’t know was that their friend was dying. Red Watch Band is not an alcohol abstinence program. Instead, it aims to provide students with the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to prevent toxic drinking deaths among college students while promoting a culture of kindness, responsibility, compassion, and respect. Students learn to recognize when their peers may be experiencing a medical emergency as a result of toxic drinking and how to secure medical/professional help to prevent possible death due to alcohol overdose.

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Environmental News
Sean Fagan 2012

Indian Villages Follow the Sun
The Indian government has decided to electrify 2,000 villages in the state of Orissa. But, instead of hooking up all of these villages to the main electric grid and have them using coal and gas, they will be outfitted with renewable energy! This is being done by using decentralized solar power, biomass, wind energy, and some hydropower projects. A total of 395 villages have been hooked-up while an additional 205 should be completed by the end of the year. All 2,000 should have basic electric needs by March 2012.

Renewable Energy Standard Gets One More Chance

Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.) and Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) have reintroduced legislation that would require utilities to obtain 15% of their energy from renewable energy resources by 2021. The previous attempt to pass a bill of this kind was unsuccessful. Unfortunately, there most likely will not be a vote on the legislation after the November elections, for politics sake. In the meantime the two senators will most likely have problems trying to obtain enough support for the bill if Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) brings it to a vote. Some democrats said that they will not support the bill including Sens. Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) and Ben Nelson (D-Neb.). Oh and we cannot forget Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) who will not support the bill and has blocked Jack Lew's nomination to the OMB until the six month moratorium on deep-water drilling is lifted.

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of... Light Bulbs?
Rep. Joe Barton (R-Tex.) has introduced legislation to protect your freedom of light bulb choice. I know what you’re thinking… WTF?! Barton has recently unveiled the “better use of light bulbs” act, which has been cosponsored by fellow senators Michael Burgess (R-Tex.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.). This act would repeal the phase-out of incandescent bulbs to more energy-efficient lighting that was approved in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. These senators claim that banning the older bulbs has caused massive layoffs in the light bulb producing sector. The only thing wrong with this is that all three senators fail to note that there are hardly any jobs left in the U.S. making light bulbs anyways, and that there has been for some time. They have also failed to note that the industry forfeited leadership by not adapting to changes in technology and that they cannot compete with cheap Chinese light bulbs. They have also gone on to attack the presence of mercury in CFL’s, which is very minute compared to the amount of mercury spewed into the atmosphere by coal burning power plants every year.

Largest Offshore Wind Farm Opens in English Channel
On September 23rd, the world’s largest offshore wind farm opened off the coast off England’s southeast coast. The farm has 100 turbines and a generating capacity of 300MW of electricity. This is equivalent to the electricity needs of 200,000 English homes. Vattenfall; the company that owns and operates the wind farm, will be constructing an additional nine wind farms in six different countries very soon. The UK already has about 5GW of electricity generation coming from wind power alone. It has an additional 18GW of wind power either consented, in construction or in planning. When this is added to the 5GW already in place, this accounts for a little more than a third of the country’s energy consumption. This sounds so much better than fish and chips.

Anchor Pod Protest
Greenpeace protestors were forced to release their yellow survival pod from the anchor chain of a Chevron-operated drill ship in Bressay Sound on Saturday 9/25. An Edinburgh court granted the ship an injunction to remove the Greenpeace protestors from the anchor chain. The protestors had equipped the pod for a month long occupation. Chevron lawyers argued that it was dangerous because it would prevent the deployment of the ships anchor if its thrusters failed. The activists decided to attach themselves the anchor chain to protest deepwater oil drilling. After being attached to the anchor chain for 100 hours, the Greenpeace activists removed themselves saying, “We didn’t want to pay hundreds of thousands of pounds of supporter money daily in fines straight into the pockets of an oil giant”. Eventually, they then released swimmers who blocked the route of the ship as it went to its deepwater drilling site. “It shouldn’t be down to people bobbings in the water in front of ships to stop the insane rush for the last drops of oil in ever more dangerous and difficult to reach places”, said one of the swimmers.

Make-a-Danket
By Chef Kevinsdude

- 1.5lbs of mixed mushrooms (such as lions mane, oyster, cremini or the catch of the day)
- 5oz of sliced bacon, chopped
- 4tbsp butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup of your favorite white wine
- pinch of nutmeg
- 1 1/2 cups of some heavy cream
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped tarragon

Here at the Knothole we love our mushrooms! So here’s another house favorite recipe, mushrooms in cream sauce. This recipe makes 4-5 servings and takes about 30 minutes. Eat it with some whole wheat bow tie pasta. It’s awesome, trust us.

1. Brush the mushrooms off with a wet paper towel to clean off any dirt. Then cut large mushrooms in halves or quarters.
2. In a large frying pan, cook the bacon over medium heat until lightly browned. Then put it on some paper towels to drain.
3. Keep the oil in the pan, lower the heat and add the butter. Add the mushrooms and garlic, stirring often, for about 10 minutes, again until browned.
4. Now add that heavy cream. Dissolve the cornstarch in 1 tbsp water and stir into the sauce and cook until thickened. Turn off the heat, season with salt and pepper and stir in the tarragon.
Remember those boxes of crayons we all used back in elementary school? They were available in traditional colors and it was an exciting day when I realized that I could now sharpen my crayons with a built in plastic tool! The most recognizable name in Crayon production, Crayola, has now added an environmentally conscience twist to its dazzling array of metallic, swirl and magically scented crayons. Crayola is coloring its production green!

Crayola partnered with PPL Renewable Energy and UGI Energy in order to install an $11.5 million dollar, 15 acre solar farm on the site of its eastern Pennsylvania plant. This “farm” will produce enough energy to manufacture one third of the 3 billion crayons Crayola currently outputs per year. Crayons are not the only product getting a boost from the new green production process; markers are getting a facelift as well. Gone are the white barrelled markers made from newly produced plastic. Instead, black barrelled markers will utilize recycled plastic to hold their ink and keep tons of plastic out of landfills each year. According to Crayola, total greenhouse gas emissions from the reworked production processes will be reduced by 1,900 tons per year. I am curious however, as to the boundaries Crayola is using when making this statement.

Many “green” technologies are not the end all-be all that they are promoted to be. Members of society need to realize that one must take system boundaries into account when deciding for themselves how beneficial a technology really is. System boundaries are important to define within an analysis because they clearly state where the system in question starts and ends. It is true that many of the recently developed energy sources are indeed less polluting than our current fossil fuel based system, however this statement only includes the final product inside its boundaries: production and transportation effects are left out.

Production costs are often high in terms of energy expenditures as well as monetarily. The U.S DOE has acknowledged that in order to create many types of renewable infrastructure, in the case of Crayola solar panels, there are necessary inputs of fossil fuel energy and rare earth metals. These rare earth metals are not necessarily uncommon within the earth in terms of abundance, but are not present in concentrations high enough to be useful. Mining processes are notoriously unclean and oftentimes leave the surface of the earth altered and not fit for the previously inhabitant life forms. The machinery used to discover the metals are run by fossil fuels which, during operation, emit pollutants into the atmosphere. Transportation of the metals and the eventual final product of solar panels are also accomplished by vehicles that most likely are run through the use of fossil fuels. As you can see, it is incorrect to state that solar panels are indeed a completely “green” technology that has a negligible impact on the environment, once the system boundaries of the analysis are extended to include the complete life cycle of production.

Perhaps Crayola is unaware of the true impacts of their newly installed solar panels or perhaps they choose to brush them aside and settle for a ride on the green marketing bandwagon; this is not for me to say. I just hope that in future we as a society become less willing to accept the oftentimes false claims of “greenness” and are able to make conscience choices regarding truly renewable energy with all the facts and proper system analyses in place.
"For I was hungry, and you fed me..."

Hilary-Anne Coppola

This past Saturday, through ESF’s campus day of service, I volunteered at Matthew 25 Farm with over thirty SU and ESF students. We harvested potatoes and tomatoes, amid the beautiful rolling hills and fall foliage of Tully. But Matthew 25 Farm is not a typical central New York farm. The crops are nothing different: pumpkins, tomatoes, lettuce, potatoes, corn, beans, cucumbers, etc; but all farm work is done for free, and the produce goes to people in need.

The man who started this Samaritan effort is Jeff Rarick, and he graciously took a break from hauling produce with his tractor to tell me about the farm. He started the story with an explanation of where he came from: As a young man, he lived an addiction-oriented lifestyle and saw no proof of God. Rarick said that after a car accident in 2004, “it was not a choice” to become a practicing Christian, but that he was compelled by the Holy Spirit.

Following his conversion, Rarick started to daydream at his job; as a mechanical engineer, he had little experience with farming, but he started planning for a farm which would feed the hungry. After five years of dreaming, his mom, Elizabeth Esmark (a member of the farm’s board of directors), bought an acre of land. “I was excited, but it wasn’t enough,” said Rarick. He found forty acres of fallow land in Tully, and tracked down the owner - a lawyer in Virginia. He told the man his story and his plans, and the owner gave him all the land free of charge.

The next blessing came with a $20,000 donation to the project. People started to contribute seeds and equipment. Finally, in January 2009, Matthew 25 Farm became reality. In 2009, the food produced on ten acres helped feed 40,000 people. When asked about the issues of organic farming: “We tried organic last year,” he said. “But we lost so much of the crop to weeds.” Crops are now protected with herbicides and fungicides to reduce loss. On Matthew 25 Farm, organic isn’t plausible - members of the local church community and volunteers do all the work, and the acreage is too large. When the mission is to provide for people, food is food.

Matthew 25 Farm is only on its second year of harvest, but they are hoping to feed 80,000 people on twelve acres of crops this year. The farm distributes its food through organizations such as the Samaritan Center, the Rescue Mission, and Salvation Army. The farm also invites people in need to collect produce. On Saturday, there were recent immigrants from Africa at the farm, collecting their own beans and corn.

ESF and SU’s involvement with this “from-the-ground-up” charity on Saturday will help feed the hungry in the central New York area. If you would like to donate funds or time to this blossoming project, go to matthew25farm.org, where you can find contact information, directions, and event listings. Though the harvest season will soon be over, the farm still needs volunteers to collect the last of the crops, so that no food is wasted.
Greenwashing at its finest
Syracuse Center of Excellence’s Symposium on Restoring Sustainable Healthy Communities

Sustainable... by whose definition?
Sarah Lanfear 2011

On Monday afternoon I rode my bike downtown to the OnCenter in the pouring rain to attend a presentation at the Syracuse Center of Excellence’s Symposium on Restoring Sustainable Healthy Communities. I showed up soaking wet but excited for the presentation entitled Recycling, Rehabilitating, and Recreating Sustainable Buildings in New York State. Unfortunately, none of those things were discussed during the presentation. Instead, Chris Daly of the Sheldrake Organization described the design and building of a LEED certified 32 story luxury condominium in New York City.

Now I can understand from looking at the Sheldrake website why one might think that this presentation would include the topics of recycling, rehabilitation and sustainability, as these are the stated goals of the organization. However, these were not manifested at all in the project discussed on Monday. The building did include a handful of different “green” features, all of which were extremely expensive, as Daly reminded us several times. These included a green roof, triple pane windows including a complex ventilation system, computerized solar panels that change angles with the position of the sun, and a water treatment system. The water treatment system includes a grey water system, which reuses water from things like washing machines and re-circulates it for irrigation and use in toilets, and a black water system which pre-treats water before it is released in the NYC sewage system. The materials that were used to build the condo included low emission paint and sustainably harvested wood. There were also several features Daly mentioned which seemed to benefit only the personal environment of the occupants including filtered air and water and bigger windows.

Though some of these features sound pretty cool, I got the impression that they are doing a lot more for the building’s image than they are for the environment. In fact, throughout the presentation Daly made no pretense about his motivations for the project, which were purely commercial. Several times throughout he actually placed himself at odds with environmentalists. From his telling the only reason the project was built with LEED certification was because it was first of all subsidized by the Battery Park City Authority and also because according to Daly “you need the LEED certification to sell to the public”. Daly said that this is the only reason it would have made sense to spend $30 million out of a $300 million project on green features. When asked about the benefits, other than image, which Daly expects to get out of all these energy saving technologies he said that any cost savings were offset by the cost of building and maintaining the systems.

Ultimately it is better that there are “green” luxury condominiums being built rather than conventional ones, however overblown the actual impact might be. My discontent comes mainly from the misleading title of the lecture and the fact that the Syracuse Center of Excellence could not find a speaker like the symposium was going to miss the point completely. What are the necessary steps towards restoring sustainable and healthy communities in our economic and sociopolitical climate? Is it building malls and putting massive highways in urban areas? I think not.

The day opened with introductory talks by, Mark Millea and Roberta Brandes Gratz, followed by a day of presentations given by professionals across fields of “Green” building and urban development. The introductory talks were by far the most enlightening of any that day. Millea is Onondaga’s Deputy County Executive for Physical Services, who has worked in the field of water finance and wastewater infrastructure. He began with a quote saying ‘To work in sustainability is to work in complexity’ because you cannot isolate components to solve the problem, a sort of systems philosophy that owns a lot of truth. He spoke about the decline in water infrastructure facing our states, and the switch to local financing due the huge loss of federal funding amounting in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Before when funding was plentiful, money was spent on expensive projects with little thought given to long term outcomes. But now under financial constraints decisions to maintain our water infrastructure need to be more tactful. He spoke of the importance of

Another Boring Symposium
Jessica Telano 2011

Tuesday morning, I arrived at the Syracuse Center of Excellence’s annual symposium at the OnCenter to a free continental breakfast in a room of fancy chairs mostly void of bodies. The turnout was scarce but this year’s theme “Restoring sustainable and healthy communities” brought together individuals with the passion to improve our world. When I saw that one of the Gold sponsors to the event was Destiny USA, I couldn’t help but feel
investment in research and development to increase water efficiency and energy efficiency, and driving innovation into the marketplace through incentive structures. Water conservation is not good because it means less revenue and higher rates for consumers, mostly at the residential level.

Roberta Brandes Gratz for the most part was plugging her new book. But, as an urban critic, she brought to light many valuable points regarding urban development. She theorized that the ‘disease’ of urban decay that has plagued many cities throughout the latter half of the 20th century was due mostly to post WWII policies of “urban renewal” that favored new development over preservation and revitalization. The resulting pattern of demolition, highway construction, and suburban sprawl left cities abandoned and lackluster. Her main point was that “you don’t have to leave a neighborhood to live in a better one.” Dedensifying areas does not reduce crime and improve communities. She was one of many who fought for legislative incentives to preserve historic buildings, and avidly supports motivation structures that help local businesses instead of encouraging overseas production.

The rest of the day consisted of two two-hour blocks of presentations bridged by a free lunch. Unable to withstand another two hours of presentations, I left before lunch. Each block of times had three different presentations simultaneously in separate rooms so I could only get to experience one track. But the presentation I stayed for was DOE’s Builder’s challenge. It was basically a bland power-point about how contractors register to be certified Green builder’s on some website, and how contractors register to be certified. Green builder’s on some website, and how if they meet these standards they get tax rebates from the government. In order to restore sustainable and healthy communities I can agree we need to create incentives for structures with low impact behaviors, but building more efficient homes is doing little bits to reduce energy consumption. In my opinion the presentations at the symposium were not radical enough to make a big difference and create the necessary avenues that will actually move towards building sustainable and healthy communities. To bring up a quote I read somewhere, “if everybody does a little, we only accomplish a little.”

New Beginnings in the Onondaga Land Rights Action

Heather Helman 2013

On March 11, 2005, the Onondaga Nation filed a Land Rights Action seeking rights to participate in the well-being of the land that was once theirs.

On September 23, 2010, a judge dismissed the Action after it had floated in legal limbo for 5 long years, saying that to pursue the Land Rights Action would be too “disruptive” to those living on the land now, and that the Onondaga Nation had simply waited too long to file a claim.

The legal precedents of this judicial decision are shaky, at best. Judge Kahn based his decision partially on recent cases involving the Oneida and Cayuga Nations, neither of which were decided in favor of the Native American nation involved. However, these cases bore relatively few similarities to the Onondaga Land Rights Action. The Onondaga’s Land Rights Action is particularly unique in that it does not seek to remove anyone from their land or displace those who have now been living on historic Onondaga land for generations. Rather, it is the environmental degradation of this area and the subsequently desperately needed clean-up that the Land Rights Action revolves around. For example, Onondaga Lake—the most polluted lake in the country—is a sacred site within Onondaga culture and history. It is the place where the Haudenosaunee Confederacy was formed under the Great Law of Peace, and a place where the Onondaga Nation once was able to fish in the waters and gather plants on the shores. Now, the lake is a toxic soup of ammonia, phosphorus, chlorinated benzenes, mercury, PCBs, and many other chemicals. The Onondaga Nation has already outlined their own vision for a clean Onondaga Lake in a broad and optimistic plan, hardly comparable to the truly insufficient DEC-Honeywell official plan being implemented. However, the fact that the Onondaga Nation is not seeking a specific “claim” to the land but rather a greater say in what happens to it is something that has until now been unheard of in American property law.

Reactions to the dismissal were nearly instantaneous. A candlelight vigil was held the night after Judge Kahn made his decision, organized by the community group Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON). Additionally, Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper for the turtle clan of the Onondaga and Seneca Nations, appeared as a guest speaker at the most recent Onondaga Land Rights and Our Common Future II lecture to comment on the dismissal. “This is a sad day for the American people and the United States,” he said, and “a stain on the Constitution.” However, while sad for the Onondaga Nation, their supporters, and all peoples fighting for recognition everywhere, this dismissal also represents a new beginning. It comes as a very little surprise that the Onondaga Nation, like Native American Nations all over the country, were given no chance to even present their case, much less win back the right to participate in the stewardship of their aboriginal territory. Yet at the same time, this creates the opportunity to win an even greater following and perhaps even stir things up in the Supreme Court, since New York State’s federal district courts are so unwilling to deal with the Onondaga Nation’s Land Rights Action. It seems to me as though the Supreme Court would be the best place to pursue this Land Rights Action, since New York State was the original offender in creating illegal treaties designed to rob the Onondagas of their land. Regardless, the dismissal of the Land Rights Action is not an opportunity to back down for even a moment. Instead, it is incentive to move forward, take action, and win back the recognition that the Onondaga Nation deserves and is asking for, albeit in more creative ways than through the New York State legal system.
Pro / Con:
Geothermal Energy

Sue Fassler 2012

The Union of Concerned Scientists describes geothermal energy as energy captured beneath the surface of the earth in a layer of hot and molten rock, or magma. The decay of radioactive materials, such as uranium or potassium, is the main driver of this heat production. Their studies show that the amount of heat within the first 33,000 feet of Earth’s surface contains 50,000 times the amount of energy than that found in all oil and natural gas deposits in the world.

NREL (National Renewable Energy Laboratory) has released a series of geothermal heat maps showing that the most concentrated and useful geothermal hot spots are located towards the West Coast. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that in these western states, up to 73,000 MW of power can be produced annually, with an average of 33,000 MW per year. Compare this potential output with that of a nuclear power plant, the largest of which (in the U.S) produces 3,825 MW a year. Besides offering a large return of power output, geothermal energy is also a flexible power source with many applications.

Geothermal power can be used in the form of steam to run through three types of power plants (dry steam, flash steam and binary cycle) for electricity creation. The heating of cooler water drives this process within the Earth’s crust. The produced hot water, which is released to the surface of the earth through drilled holes, is captured by the power plants.

Another application of geothermal energy is direct use. Hot water can be used for heating local resorts, de-icing roadways in colder climates, and heating areas that also utilize high humidity environments (like a greenhouse). For homeowners, the most accessible geothermal option is the ground-source heat pump. Heat pumps use the relatively stable year round temperature of the ground a few feet below the surface in their energy capturing processes. This approach uses liquid or gas to capture temperature differentials between the solvent and the ground. Heat pumps also provides heat in the winter (as the ground is a good insulator and retains heat) and cooling in the summer (as heat from buildings is transferred into the ground).

Though geothermal energy production requires a large initial monetary investment, the principal is paid off: geothermal energy is “free” in the sense that the Earth provides a renewable energy. Outside fuel is not usually required to run geothermal power plants, so operational fuel costs are very low. Geothermal power plants can be built on small tracts containing less “desirable” land. This advantage of geothermal power will lower ecological impacts and eliminate habitat fragmentation. Geothermal also is clean: there is no production of large quantities of pollutants. A paper by Bloomfield, Moore and Neilson, written under DOE contract, states that geothermal energy releases .20 lbs CO2/kW-hr, compared to 2.095 for coal, 1.969 for petroleum, and 1.321 for natural gas.

Regarding the transition from a fossil fuel dependent society to a more sustainable future, geothermal energy is a viable option worth consideration. It can provide high quality, useable energy while boasting high energy returns. Geothermal power is a flexible option that meshes with society’s ever-changing nature while providing a multitude of useful services, and deserves an increase of research and application throughout the world.

Michelle Arnold 2011

Geothermal (“geo”- earth, “thermos”- heat) will save us! It is cleaner and safer than fossil fuels, cost effective, reliable, and is in unending supply. As a society, all we have to do is tap into this resource and it will supply us with all the heating energy we need. Now- read the first three sentences of this article again, but this time substitute “geothermal” for any alternative energy that science has come up with in the last 100 years. This shows how we all have high hopes that alternative energy sources will bring us away from fossil fuel use. When looking into the future of these energies, we must look at the reality of the system we want to change. As most of us know by now: “if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is”.

It is known that we live in a society focused around money. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, “the initial cost for the field and power plant is around $2500 per installed kW in the U.S.”. During research, it was found that this was the lowest estimation; all other estimates ranged over $3400 kW. The capital concerns for geothermal are in exploration and construction, rather than maintenance. Because geothermal characteristics change with the area, exploration of sites is a long, expensive process. Once the exploration stage ends, construction begins and competition for resources
(steel, cement, labor, etc.) within local, regional, and state arenas drive prices up. It should also be noted that the cost for individual geothermal pumps varies significantly.

Along with the cost comes safety concerns for the public. In geothermal pumps, water is pushed through the tubes, producing waste water with high mineral content (sodium, calcium, sulfate, chloride, or iron). According to the USGS: “Concentrations of some constituents usually exceed those in the standards recommended”. Not only does this apply to the water running through the pipes in your house, but it also applies to that water after it re-enters the environment. Water is the most important resource we have on this planet. If we discount the effects of ANY energy on our water reservoirs, we are foolish and put our children at risk in the future. The pumps also release gases such as hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, and boron into the atmosphere as well as large amounts of water vapor. These chemicals released are at significantly lower levels than amounts from fossil fuels, but if you have a geothermal pump connected in your backyard where your dog and kids play, you might have concerns for their health.

Because we are at ESF, the environment is our major concern. Another factor that is not only a safety risk, but also a huge environmental risk, is related to the stability of a location once a geothermal plant is in place. A January 2009 Scientific American article described how drilling 4.8 km into the earth’s crust in Basel, Switzerland set off a magnitude 3.4 earthquake, rocking the town and shutting the operation down entirely. We need to understand how the Earth will react to drilling, as reactions are often unpredictable; sites should be tested carefully. Geothermal plants take over large stretches of land, often displacing various animal species. The animals living in the area rely on the ground temperature to maintain homeostasis and some rely on it for entire seasons between life stages. To my surprise, it was hard to find articles addressing the long term effects of geothermal energy on ground temperature changes and sustainability of resource, though I discovered that the Geyser’s fields in California have been slowly cooling down since the 1960’s (Axelsson 2005). Like biofuels, geothermal energy production must be regulated in order to reduce harm on the ecosystem. Just like the site in California, over use could easily exhaust locations and devastate the ecosystem above and below the ground.

What it comes down to is this: we can’t turn over the tyrant we know for what could possibly be a worse one. Further research is needed, and at this time, I believe the risks to the environment, public safety, economics and our future outweigh the potential of geothermal energy. Will we give up air pollution for earthquakes and volcanic eruptions? Will we give up oil wells for geothermal pumps that create waste water and known chemical deposits? It is up to us to make sure we push and ask the hard questions about our replacement energies. It is our job at ESF to think of the whole picture: if changes have to be made, then that is what we strive for. If something is too good to be true then it usually is. Alternative energies don’t have to be perfect, but they do have to be understood in terms of space and time.

From past experiences it is safe to say that Insomniac Events don’t always attract the largest crowds. That was not the case for Green Campus Initiative and the Environmental Studies Student Organization’s Insomniac Event last Friday night. There were over seventy-five students present eating good food, swapping clothes, making crafts from recycling, and planting herbs in pots and compost supplied by GCI! It was an extremely successful event and just a preview of this year’s events from Green Campus Initiative.

Our next big event will be the State of Syracuse Forum held Tuesday, November 16. Speakers with different specialties and interests are coming to ESF to discuss and debate the current state of Syracuse. Students will have the opportunity to ask the speakers questions about what is being done and changes they want to see happen. Look out for advertisements around town and save the date!
The Extreme Animals performed at Spark this past Tuesday. There is no way to truly describe the insanity that this band and its video performance produced. Jacob Ciocci and David Wightman, band members, sat behind an abundance of electronics: Ciocci rapping and Wightman riffing his distorted electric guitar to the chaos of dripping and flashing video graphics.

Their videos are part-ripped, part self-made images overlaying images overlaying images. With fabricated Rattatat-resembling beats and ear-deafening metal-esque sounds, I found myself head banging to the music in sheer ecstasy. The focus of their performance was not on the band, which seemed to be merely a supplement to Ciocci et al.’s epileptic video.

The video was intensely perplexing, but it somehow bizarrely and coherently explained the meaning of life. In between images of explosions, fire, smoke, exercise video excerpts, distorted mime footage, and trippy rainbow graphics; tranquility and comedy sometimes emerged. One of these moments occurred when a notice appeared on the screen saying, “the effect ‘cool’ failed to render.” A pure stroke of genius, in my opinion.

At one point, Ciocci took center stage and rambled on about popular culture and the interpretation of planet 2010. He promptly explained that he was collaborating on a piece with Justin Bieber, one that would combine the heady music of this twerpy artist with the chic of art. “Martsic” would be justly formed, much like the videos of the wondrous Lady Gaga.

He then proceeded to show this supposed “Justin Bieber collaboration”: a video of low quality ripped Google images of Mother Earth with a cheesy song about how the world is weeping. Meanwhile, a blow-up earth beach ball in hand, he proceeded to deflate the earth with his face while shouting about how it is getting smaller because of the internet, cars, Skype, etc., etc. (A bit over the top?) The final comment to appear on screen was another notice, reading, “We’re sorry, ‘change’ isn’t possible at this time, please try again later.” I wondered if the whole act was a crude joke about environmentalists, or just the opposite…

Overall, there was an interesting message underlying their work, one that I was somewhat able to conjure from the explosion of confusion in the performance. I’d like to think that it was one huge satire of popular culture, focusing on the drunken indifference of current American culture towards anything other than what supposedly fits the concept of “cool”. Cell phones are cool, the environment is not.

Some of their videos, including the first they performed (search Extreme Animals “Questions of the Ages”), is available on YouTube. My favorite video of Ciocci’s is entitled, “P-UNIT-t !!! posted by paperrad on YouTube.

Look for this Article in the our next issue!
By Tere (ESF Alumni)

This year the Westcott Street Cultural Fair, a celebration of community and diversity, was held on September 19. A great time was had by all, well, unless you brought your hula hoop. I was very un-kindly told to stop hoop-dancing during one of the main musical acts at this year’s fair. The woman who reprimanded me appeared to be a member of the Westcott Fair committee (and claimed to have authority), however would not tell me her name or who she represented. I gathered that she was part of the committee by her ‘uniform’, which was shared with other fair representatives. When I asked her if there was a reason for her telling me not to dance, she said “because I’m telling you...” Again, I asked if there was a ‘no hooping’ sign that I had missed, or some law or statute that forbade hoop-dancing at a public event, and again she responded with, “No... I’m just telling you...” and then added, “Or I can just be a real B**ch and just have the cops come arrest you...” Was she serious? Arrested for dancing?

I am the creator and lead contact of CleanHeartHoopTroop, a hula hoop dance troupe started in the Westcott Neighborhood. For coming up on two years now we have provided a free family event at Thornden Park by hosting weekly dance and drum circle events. We also frequent the CNY music scene, appearing and entertaining at various concerts, street fairs, festivals and other community events. We provide entertainment, demo our hoops to onlookers, encourage participation, and promote healthy, wholesome family fun for all genders, races and ages. Last year during our free festival in Thornden Park, we celebrated World Hoop Day with local musicians in the community as well as raffled off donations made by local vendors. The community has responded warmly to our group, and we have been asked to return to many events such as Shakespeare in the Park, as well as being invited to new events. Last year we participated in the Westcott Cultural Fair with a vending booth and circulated around the fair displaying our act. We were a smashing success! Hundreds of people tried out the hoop for their first time, many hoops were given away to children, and many were sold to both new and experienced hoopers.

We were asked to return to the fair this year, but decided to decline after we were told we wouldn’t’ be able to sell, demo or let others try the hoops. How were we to accomplish our mission of spreading joy, health, artful expression and freedom through hooping if we couldn’t hoop? Why were these restraints placed on our group but not any other? The bellydancers were still dancing... the Morris Dancers were still wielding their ‘swords’ and ‘staffs’...

I was contacted on my home phone TWICE and asked to participate in the fair after declining! Either there seems to be a lack of communication amidst the Fair committee, or a particular person is singling out our group without the committee’s consensus. I feel that our group embodies what the Westcott Nation is all about: freedom and sharing with the community! I will continue to spread joy, health and unity through hooping as long as I have the ability to do so. Freedom and expression of art is vital to the human experience, and I plan on promoting that in as many ways as possible! I am thankful that most members of the community support our mission, and I have sympathy for those that cannot seem to find the joy that I have found inside a hula hoop!

www.westcotttheater.com
Say Yes to Sustainability
Michelle Gluck 2011

Last Tuesday, tired from a long day at school, I debated attending Majora Carter’s lecture; the first lecture of the Syracuse University lecture series for this year. In retrospect, I am very glad to have attended the lecture and left feeling inspired with the confidence that one individual’s perseverance, creativity, and drive can go a long way, and when a whole group of these individuals get together as community members, positive change is created for a whole community of people. When you can leave a lecture feeling this way, you know it was worth attending and the speaker’s words were true to their cause.

This article isn’t about Mrs. Carter specifically, but the application of empowering community activism that she represents, into the people and places of Syracuse - specifically the Near West Side communities.

“I believe that you shouldn’t have to leave your neighborhood to live in a better one.”

This is a quote posted by Majora Carter on her website created for the Majora Carter Group. The quote is simple, and in my opinion quite powerful and effective. It’s true – instead of giving up on a place, why not put some heart into it and help make positive change for an area?

There are many initiatives taking place in the city of Syracuse that relate to this idea – some that I’m sure you are aware of, and some that maybe you aren’t. If you are interested in these initiatives I suggest hopping on your bike (if you have one) and doing some research. I have learned so much about Syracuse as a city and efforts in place to improve the city environment simply by observing from my bike, and then taking action myself.

601 Tully is an ongoing project located at 601 Tully Street to transform a vacant building and lot that is a symbol of economic hardship into an educational art center.”

This summer I worked in the Near West side at a k-8 school called Blodgett that is located across the street from Skiddy Park. I spent every morning and afternoon biking around the community that surrounds this school and as a result, my awareness and sense of place and knowledge of efforts to “green” the city and just make it more pleasing for residents and people passing by improved. Tully Street runs adjacent to the school, and is a street representative of multiple initiatives taking place to help improve the quality of life for residents in this area.

601 Tully is an ongoing project that is located at 515 Tully Street, there is a beautiful rain garden where before there was weathered asphalt. Designed by a Syracuse University student and supported by the Near Westside Initiative and the Center of Excellence, the rain garden represents one of many green infrastructure projects currently in action. I took a group of kindergarten and 1st grade students to Dave and Helen’s rain garden as a “field trip.” It was inspiring to observe the kids exploring the yard and asking questions about the green roof, rain barrels, and the colorful flowers decorating the yard. I wonder if the kids would have been as enthused if I took them to a bed of asphalt instead...

Check out more green infrastructure initiatives that you can be a part of, or just go see, on the SUNY ESF homepage; http://www.esf.edu/outreach/gi/resources.htm.

And remember, if you’re ever bored or feeling that the concrete city environment is getting you down, and you wish there was something you could do about it... take some initiative and do it!

Volunteers cleaning up the vacant lot at 601 Tully

DO NOT MISS:

Tuesday 10/5
Andrew Simmons
Wildlife Expert
@ 7PM in Marshall Aud

Thursday 10/7
John Zaffis
Ghost Hunter
@ 7PM in Marshall Aud
“Bonfire”
BettyJo Roby

She walked down the street from Nancy’s Bed & Breakfast, between symmetrical lines of privacy shrubs. Church bells broke through the fresh, salty breeze.

She walked alone and barefoot, trusting sidewalks to be absent of nails and glass. She walked every day for two weeks, through the streets of the abandoned tourist town, down the pale winter beach littered with sea-shells and debris.

She walked without him because he couldn’t walk with her, would never walk with her again. She walked here, specifically, because they had walked those streets together. She took in the sidewalk cracks, the bare branch patterns, the streets dead ending into beaches or docks or trees, the churning gray ocean, the look of his hair in the winter sun (their favorite beach season), and his portentous cough. She scratched the details and memories onto scraps of paper.

At night she compiled her notes into an ambitious account: Henry in Westhampton. She included every important thing she could remember in the town that knew him best, walking the streets every lighted hour until she had covered every familiar street and stretch of sand several times.

At the end of the two weeks, she burned the whole thing. She went down to the beach after dark and piled dried cattails and washed up wood scraps with the cardboard box of her memories, lit them in the crisp January air. It took half the night, but in the pre-dawn chill the fire finally burned out, and she slowly walked back to the Nancy’s Bed & Breakfast to pack up and head home. She looked straight ahead as she walked.

The next day she was back in work: getting coffee, driving through rush hour, calling her mother in the evening.

One year after the bonfire, she woke up, washed her face, and called in to work. She sat down at her desk and began to write.
Syraucuse deserves a round of applause, for if someone as important and influential as Majora Carter finds Syracuse to be amazing enough to tweet “love this city” upon her arrival, than we must be doing something right. She was the first speaker of Syracuse University’s lecture series and boy, did she set the bar high. For those of you unfamiliar with Majora Carter, she is the leader of a variety of environmental justice projects in NYC. Thanks to Majora’s work and the dedication of many community members, the South Bronx, a once intensely environmentally degraded area, now serves as the leader of green urban renewal possibilities.

Last Tuesday, in Hendricks Chapel, Majora talked about all that has been accomplished for her home town. Majora admitted herself that as a child it was her life goal to leave the city. She spoke fondly of her dreams to flee her home, become a college graduate and write the next great screen play. After her undergraduate career, however, she returned to New York City- an act that shaped the rest of her life. She spoke of the eye opening experiences she had as she reentered this once familiar place. It can’t be denied that the Bronx has an intense drug and crime problem. Its community organization was minimal and the environmental burden was high, considering it was hosting 40% of the city’s disposed solid waste. Majora mentioned the countless studies proving the direct correlation between the color of one’s skin and one’s economic status to environmental degradation exposure. She stated that basically the darker your skin and the poorer you are, the higher your chance of being exposed to environmental trouble. It’s a confrontational statistic that required a passionate community leader to tackle.

So, she started small (doesn’t everyone?) with a park she discovered while walking one day. The renovations took months, but the product became something that everyone in the community is proud of: a beautiful blossoming green space with attractions for all ages, right against the Bronx River. Majora herself used this park as the location for her wedding. From there the community began to flourish with new ideas and opportunities. Spaces that were once used as garbage dumps are transforming into greenways and natural landscapes.

Majora now has her own company, the Majora Carter Group, and is spearheading projects such as the Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training (BEST), which provides green jobs training with an 85% employment rate upon completion, and the South Bronx Greenway, an example of sustainable management practices with visually stimulating environments. Her company also supports and promotes smart roofs, wetland restoration and urban micro-agribusiness.

The revival story of this urban community is one of obvious hope. The community-implemented projects show us, as ESF students and Syracuse residents (for at least eight months a year), that urban revitalization projects are possible if we support their initiation. Majora’s optimism is contagious. Her convincing phrase “you never have to move out of a neighborhood because you can build a better one” gives support to anyone that feels the need for local change.

Check out what’s new with Majora Carter at www.majoracartergroup.com, or sneak a peek at new Syracuse green initiative projects by Googling “Near West Side Initiative”.

“Love This City”
Hannah Dean-Wood

Photo Credit: Anthony Vicente
MIGHTY OAKS: ESF SPORTS

Knothole’s sports page, keeping you updated on the mighty oaks success!

Above: Header by Kelsey Taylor, Ana Flores

Photo Credit:
Tina Elliott & ESF Communications

Above: Mike Schriver makes a save with Steven Tyrell and Kevin Busa on defence. Below: Header by Wyatt Jacobi, Ross Volpe

Womens team: lost 2-1.
Mens team: tied 0-0

Above: ESF’s Golf Team competing in Vermont

Below: ESF’s Golf Team

Photo Credit: Anthony Vicente
STUMPED!  the back page game gauntlet

SUDOKU!

Bruce Lee!
Paper Doll

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