



CRC's GREEN SCENE

A bimonthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College

GreenForce Earmark Grant Supports Campus Sustainability Projects

Torence Powell reports...

In 2009, CRC was awarded a Federal Earmark Grant by Representative Doris Matsui to support our GreenForce programs. This grant has since provided the foundation for many sustainability-themed efforts on campus by supporting the purchase of new equipment, training opportunities for faculty and staff, films for the Green Screen Environmental Film Series, and GreenForce courses that, without grant funding, would not have been offered.

As we approach the end of this grant performance period, we reflect back on two of the most recent projects the grant has made possible. A special thank you to Representative Doris Matsui's office for all of its efforts to support CRC and Los Rios.

Composting Demo Site

Early next year, if all goes well, CRC will have a place where students, faculty, and staff can learn the steps of the composting cycle as well as simple tips for starting a home-composting project.

The compost demonstration site, to be housed in the horticulture department, will initially feature large 'tumblers' (sealable bins) into which organic material such as raw



food scraps, grass clippings, and leaves can be placed. The tumblers 'cook' the organic material by trapping heat produced in the decomposition process, converting the material into nutrient-rich compost.

Since compost must be monitored and mixed regularly, a solar-powered electric motor will power CRC's tumblers—thus reducing the need for people power. Additional composting units, however, will need to be turned the old-fashioned way.

Inspiration for the site largely came about through the work of horticulture professor Dave Andrews. The site will be the first step in what the Sustainability Committee hopes will become a larger effort to capture and process compostable material on campus. The compost created will be used in CRC's horticulture courses,

(SEE ENERGY, PAGE 2)

In This Issue:

Sac County Bus Service to Improve 2

Running the Numbers:
Chris Jordan Photography 3

CHES Conference:
Electric Vehicles on Campus, Plastic Recycling Confusion, CRV Pilot Project Considered 4 - 5

TREE Tips:
Hang Out That Laundry 6

Student Profile:
Jon Conibear 6

Santa Rosa Student Encourages Action at CRC 7

News In Brief:
Kenyan Peace Prize Winner Wangari Maathai Dies, Green Scene Awards 8

Energy Audit Kits, Composting Site Among Funded Projects

FROM PAGE 1

reducing the need to purchase compost and fertilizers to support horticulture projects.

Students, faculty, and staff interested in participating in the demonstration site or in learning about composting in general are encouraged to explore the horticulture department's course offerings.

Environmental Studies' Energy Use Assessment

How much electricity does that HDTV of yours really use in a day—and how much is it costing you? How much air leaks in or out through the doors, windows, and cracks of your home when your heater or AC is running? These are the types of questions Professor Debra Sharkey's Environmental Studies and Sustainability students are answering this

semester, thanks in part to new energy-auditing equipment that makes tracking energy consumption as simple as plugging a gadget into the wall.



The Energy Use Assessment project is a 7-10 day study conducted by Geography 302 student groups. Students take home the newly acquired Energy Use Assessment kits to track their energy usage patterns and to assess how efficient their homes are. Each Energy Use Assessment kit includes an

energy consumption meter, a thermal camera that is used to measure air flow into and out of homes, and a light meter that measures how much light falls on a surface.

The study encourages students to consider their energy-use patterns by making them aware of just how much energy is wasted by leaking through old weather-sealing around doors and windows or by leaving small household appliances plugged in all day. The equipment helps to demonstrate how some simple and cost-effective strategies can reduce energy consumption and save money.

Students, faculty, and staff interested in learning more about this equipment and its uses are encouraged to contact Debra Sharkey in the geography department.

Sac County Bus Service to Improve

Andi Salmi reports...

The current bus service from Lodi and Galt takes passengers to Elk Grove Boulevard or the Florin Mall rather than directly to CRC, an inconvenience for south area students.

Ed Coviello, an assistant planner with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, spoke to the Sustainability Committee at the September 9 meeting about a proposal to provide Sacramento County Transit bus service from Lodi

and Galt directly to the CRC campus. The route would include hourly service into the early evenings, with the possibility of later service in the future, and a student discount pass. This service should provide greater opportunities for students from Galt and Lodi to attend classes at CRC.



By the way, did you know that Los Rios students can

purchase a Regional Transit Pass card for \$5 - \$15 per semester (depending on the number of enrolled units)?

This card is valid on all public transit bus and light-rail systems in Sacramento, Yolo (excluding Unitrans), Folsom, El Dorado, and Elk Grove.

For more information on the RT Pass card, go to the CRC Home page, follow the Continuing Students link to Student Access Card, and click on Regional Transit Pass Card.



Running the Numbers: Chris Jordan's Photography Reveals Wasteful Excess

Lizz Gaylord reports...

When you first see photographs by Chris Jordan, you might not understand the significance and power of what you are viewing. You seem to be looking at iconic works by other artists ("The Birth of Venus," "Starry Night," an Aztec calendar); however, they just don't seem as crisp as usual.

Then you read the title, which says something like,

"Depicts 240,000 plastic bags, equal to the estimated number of plastic bags consumed around the world every ten seconds."

Curiosity piqued, you apply the zoom feature to slowly reveal the smaller image—not a painting at all, but a grouping of commonly used everyday items, such as toothbrushes or plastic spoons. Jordan's photos depict plastic bags, Styrofoam cups, even Barbie™ dolls, all cleverly hidden within a

beautiful work of art, but ultimately revealing a wasteful society.

In his collection *Running the Numbers*, Jordan creates photographs based on the statistics of excess—millions of plastic bags, billions of aluminum cans—that we hear every day and don't think anything of. His goal is to make us realize the impact we have on our resources. These are not just abstract numbers – they are all too real.

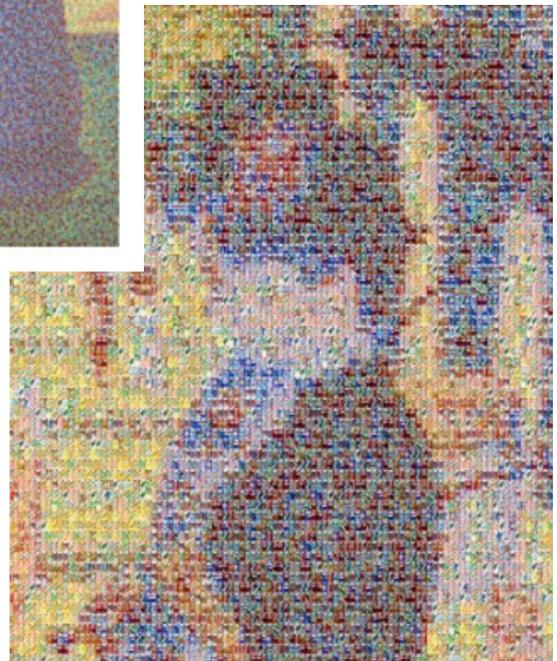
Viewing these photographs makes me wonder: if we could see the vast quantity of resources that we use and waste, would we all work harder to conserve those resources? See for yourself at www.chrisjordan.com.



Cans Seurat, 2007
60x92"

Photography by Chris Jordan.

Depicts 106,000 aluminum cans, the number used in the US every thirty seconds.





CHES Conference Instructs and Inspires

Donna Leiva reports...

The California Higher Education Sustainability Conference (CHESC) in Long Beach, July 10– 14, provided Professor Debra Sharkey and several CRC students with a wealth of useful information and an opportunity to network with like-minded people. Its array of activities included local tours, venter booths, and awards, as well as workshops and seminars presented by people no different from you and me, catering to a broad audience of students, faculty, staff, and administrators from community colleges, CSU's and UC's.

The wide variety of vendors, from non-profit agencies to green cleaning supplies, showcased

the products and services that can further sustainability efforts on any campus—and offered students an opportunity to seek out possible future employment opportunities.

It's easy to become discouraged when embarking on social change, but CHESC inspired a positive vibe, acting as a catalyst for connecting people, developing mentorships, and inspiring a 'we can' attitude.

CHESC will be held at UC Davis, June 18 – 21, 2012 – perhaps YOU might attend!

For more information see www.cahigheredusustainability.org

Coming to California College Campuses: Electric Vehicles!

Lizz Gaylord reports...

With hordes of electric vehicles (EV's) slated to flood the market in 2012, it's not surprising that one CHESC session was dedicated to a discussion of ways for colleges to deal with this new wave. Many universities already plan to add EV's to their campus fleets (UC San Diego will purchase 50 for use by faculty and staff on and off campus).



A harder issue for colleges is how to accommodate the anticipated influx of privately owned EV's, which will need

not only parking spaces but also charging stations. Some ideas under consideration include a 'FastTrak' card system that charges users for the time they are parked and 'pay stations' that would act like electricity vending machines.

I was interested to learn from Rick Teebay, with the L.A. County Office of Sustainability, that 28% of all current charging stations in California are in L.A. County and two-thirds in Southern California. (He also showed us a cool, color-coded, real-time map of the locations and availability of Southern California charging stations!). Southern California, with its larger population, has taken the lead, but perhaps Northern California can learn from that head start and be proactive.

Panel members indicated that the only way we will ever see more parking spaces and charging stations is to contact our campus leaders in person and in writing.



Plastic Recycling Confusion

Lizz Gaylord reports...

Does this scene sound familiar? A student walks up to the recycle bins on campus, looks at her item (usually a plastic water bottle), looks at the choice of bins, then gives up, tossing the item into the regular trash container. This scene, along with the

(SEE STUDENTS, PAGE 5)

Students Return from Conference Ready for Action

FROM PAGE 4

Sustainability Committee's focus on CRC's recycling collection program, drew me to a CEHSC session titled "Understanding the Plastics Market" that helped me understand the disconnect between the would-be recycler and the recycling bin.

First, the plastics industry, and therefore the plastics recycling industry, is relatively new and so not as well established as the glass and paper recycling industries. Second, there are *seven* types of plastic, labeled #1-#7, all of which can, in theory, be recycled, depending on your location and on the policy of the company that hauls away your waste. However, almost nowhere offers the full range – although larger cities tend to have more extensive recycling programs. (Hmm – that plastic item you've carefully placed in the recycling bin may be headed for the waste collection center after all.)

Unfortunately, from a sustainability standpoint, recycling plastic is labor-intensive, pollution-intensive, and oil-intensive. It is often sent overseas to be cleaned, sorted, and 'repurposed' -- only to be put back onto ships and brought back to the U.S. These recycled products are then off-loaded at the ports and trucked thousands of miles to a distribution center from where they are trucked out once more

and delivered to a store near you.

Nonetheless, it's clear we cannot *not* recycle plastic products. According to National Geographic and others, plastic bags and polystyrene food and beverage containers are number two and three (with cigarette butts being number one) on the list of trash items most commonly found in our oceans today.

Interestingly, the San Francisco based company, Method, has just announced it has 'upcycled' ocean plastic from the Northern Pacific Gyre (a.k.a. the Great Pacific Garbage Patch) near Hawaii and created a new Ocean plastic recycled bottle. (You can read more at: <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/method-unveils-breakthrough-bottle-made-of-ocean-plastic-2011-09-15>.)

The best way to find out about the recycling programs offered in your area, then, is to call the city and/or county concerned.

CRV Collection Could Support Green Efforts

Donna Leiva reports...

After learning at CHESC 2011 of the successful and lucrative recycling programs implemented by community colleges such as Orange County Community College and Santa Rosa Junior College,



Donna Leiva, Jon Conibear, Prof. Debra Sharkey, Reid Hewitt, and Lizz Gaylord were energized from attending the CHES Conference last summer in Long Beach.

I returned to CRC determined to implement change here. Currently, CRC has an arrangement with Valley High School to allow their developmentally-challenged students to collect CRV redeemable containers from the CRC campus. The high school retains the funds from the redemption of those containers.

With the support of the Sustainability Committee, I'm now looking into ways in which we might reorganize the collection of CRV containers without taking away from the Valley High program – but with a view to using the funds generated as seed money for other sustainability efforts on the CRC campus.

I've initiated discussions with CRC facilities administrators. Expect an update in the next Green Scene!



TREE Tips by Ann Rothschild

Hang Out That Laundry on a Clothes-line!

Editor's Note: In the first of an occasional series, retired English Professor Ann Rothschild shares tips for living sustainably, originally printed in her church's e-newsletter. TREE, Trinity Respecting Earth and Environment, is the group at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Sacramento who work on the church's environmental ministry.

Dryers use 10-15 percent of domestic energy in the United States. In a Sacramento summer (and early fall!), there

is no excuse for using a dryer to dry your laundry. With hot, dry days, a load is dry in a few hours and conserves energy and the environment, while reducing climate change.

It is also in your interest: you save many dollars a month off your electric bill, and clothes smell better without adding possible toxins to your body and the environment. Sunlight bleaches and disinfects. Clothes last longer: where do you think lint comes from?

Even in winter, indoor

clothing racks can humidify your house so your skin is not so dried out!

Start at once—people all over the world hang out their laundry. It's time we got on board.

This information is from www.laundrylist.org and a great blog: www.terrapass.com/blog/posts/how-to-finance-2



Meet CRC's Student Sustainability Club Members

Nagging Feeling Leads Student to Sustainability and CRC



Students for a Sustainable Future club member Jon Conibear is hoping to create a better world for his children and grandchildren.

Editor's Note: In this continuing series, we feature a student from CRC's Students for a Sustainable Future club.

Jon Conibear, a single grandfather and father of two, was born in Oswego, New York in 1963. In addition to Upstate New York, he has lived in thirteen other states, including California. At 17, Jon joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany for eighteen months. At 23, he embarked on a double major in theology and physical education, with a minor in secondary education. However, deciding that school was not what he really wanted to do right then, he dropped out and was married soon after.

As he moved through life,

Jon experienced an ever-present nagging feeling about the gobbling up of resources and the little care or attention paid to it. A television commercial from the 70's weighs heavily on his heart to this day: an old Indian chief stands beside a busy highway with litter spread everywhere. As the chief surveys the filth, a single tear rolls down his cheek.

This image has led Jon to return to college to make the world a better place for those to come—hence his focus at CRC on geography, environmental studies, and sustainability. Jon is also vice president and co-founder of CRC's Students for a Sustainable Future Club, and he extends a warm welcome to anyone wishing to join the club and help make a difference.

Santa Rosa Student Encourages Action at CRC

On August 30, Santa Rosa Junior College ASG President Jessica Jones spoke to students in Prof. Debra Sharkey's Environmental Studies & Sustainability class about how she and other SRJC students and staff have worked together to make SRJC a more sustainably-operated campus.

Among the highlights of her presentation were the methods students used to improve recycling efforts on campus and to promote other sustainable practices both on campus and in the local community. Jones also described the campaign she and a faculty member spearheaded that resulted in the SRJC President signing the Talloires Declaration (an "official statement made by university administrators of a commitment to environmental sustainability in higher education").



Jessica Jones, far right, watches as the SRJC president signs the Talloires Declaration.

According to the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, the Talloires Declaration is "a ten-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy in teaching, research, operations, and outreach at colleges and universities." To date, it has been signed by more than 350 college leaders in more than 40 countries. Read more at <http://www.ulsf.org/programs/talloires.html>.

Below you can read how some students responded to Jones's presentation:

"Jessica Jones is not your typical AS president, especially when it comes to sustainability efforts on a community college campus. I love her simple yet compelling story of why she got involved in sustainability and her fact-based presentation of how she approached campus administrators and successfully implemented several sustainability efforts, such as improving energy efficiency and starting a recycling program at SRJC."

-- Donna Leiva

"The presentation was awesome. It showed how, with determination, you can

get things done. When you feel passionate about an issue, cause, or anything, be like Nike. Do something about it."

-- Sonya Marshall-Bruner

"I thought Jessica Jones was fabulous! She was inspirational, organized, and driven. Her dedication to sustainability is extraordinary! I have found myself discouraged after setbacks, but she only views them as challenges to overcome, not to give up on. I truly wish I had her drive and ambition. I'd like to think that if I was a young college student without work or family, I could be more dedicated like her, but she still gave me inspiration to find the time to do more!"

-- Veronica Vogan

"I really appreciate how passionate and concerned Jessica is about environmental issues and especially the environmental impact of her school."

-- John Galas

"Jessica's speech really helped give a feeling that even a small attempt by one or a few people can grow into something big."

-- Rubina Ahmad



**Cosumnes River College
Sustainability Committee**

Members:

- Tamyra Carmona
- Jon Cornelison
- Steven Coughran
- Julie Elliott
- John Ellis
- Cindy Erickson
- Cath Hooper
- Torence Powell
- Andrea Salmi (Chair)
- Susan Scott
- Debra Sharkey
- Linn Violett

Student Members:

- Elizabeth Gaylord
- Donna Leiva

Newsletter:

- Cindy Erickson
- Cath Hooper

News In Brief...

**Kenyan Peace Prize winner
Maathai made lasting contribution**



Environmentalists the world over are mourning the passing of Nobel Peace Prize winner, Wangari Maathai, 71, from cancer. Maathai is best known for her leadership in Kenya's Green Belt Movement, which aimed to prevent erosion through the planting

of trees and to empower the women who planted them.

Maathai's environmental activism was recognized by the Nobel Committee, and in 2004 she became the first African woman, and the first environmentalist, to win the Peace Prize.

Coming next issue: the legacy of Wangari Maathai.



Don't Miss *Climate Refugees* Today

Next up in the Green Screen Film Series are *Climate Refugees* (10/11), *Tapped* (10/25), and *Split Estate* (11/ 10).

Films are shown Tuesday afternoons in SCI 106. For details, see <http://www.crc.losrios.edu/Events and Culture/The Green Screen.htm>



Green Scene Awards:

Kudos to...

- Robert Montanez and Cindy Petty, for ordering recyclable AusPens for faculty in the SME area.
- Torence Powell, Robert Montanez, and Corey Wathen, for buying backer boards needed for recycling bins around campus.
- Corey Wathen, for purchasing new and improved Maxar recycle bins placed all over campus like those purchased for the SME Area last year.
- Nancy Edmonson, for continuing to send Professional Development brochures by email, thus saving paper.
- Debra Sharkey, for inviting Jessica Jones to CRC and for bringing students to the CHES Conference last July.
- Debbie Travis and the CRC Foundation, who provided funding that allowed several students to attend the CHES Conference in July.
- SMUD, the LRCCD Office of Facilities Management, and our IT department, for buying and installing Infrared Occupancy Sensor Power Strips in offices throughout the district. Motion detectors on the strips will save energy and money by automatically turning off power to selected devices when it is not needed.



We're on the Web!

*Look for archived issues
of the
GREEN SCENE
on the CRC homepage.*