



CRC's GREEN SCENE

A monthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College

CRC Professor Gets Holiday Bonus for Inflating Tires

John Ellis reports...

Does that headline sound like “yellow journalism?” Do you remember the claim that Barack Obama made during one of the town hall meetings? *“There are things that you can do individually, though, to save energy. Making sure your tires are properly inflated—simple thing. But we could save all the oil that they’re talking about getting off drilling, if everybody was just inflating their tires, and getting regular tune-ups. You could actually save as much.”* Or perhaps you remember Governor Arnold

Schwarzenegger saying last August that *“you can reduce your fuel costs by more than 15 percent. And I am talking about simple things, like proper tire pressure, avoiding rapid starts and stops, and keeping your engine tuned.”*

Now, all of the CRC automotive guys will vouch that I am not the smartest guy in the world when it comes to cars, but when an ‘idiot light’ in my car warned me that my tires were under-inflated, I decided to check out these statements.

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O Tannenbaum!

Cath Hooper reports...

As a lover of Christmas tradition, I usually have the Christmas tree up by now, but this year my husband and I hesitated to rush out and buy a cut (i.e. dead) tree destined for the garden recycling container. However, recyclable does not necessarily mean ecologically sound: fossil fuels are expended in bringing the trees — and the shoppers — to the local lots, not to mention the energy required for disposal.

My husband was all for purchasing a fake tree — reusable, he pointed out, for many years to come. A little online research soon convinced me that ‘reusable,’ like



‘recyclable,’ does not necessarily equal ecologically sound. It appears that most fake trees are manufactured in China (think shipping) from all kinds of nasty

(SEE TREE, PAGE 4)



Meet our Student Members



Kelsey Jacoby, student member of the CRC Sustainability committee, will transfer to CSUS in January to study Marketing.

The CRC Sustainability Committee has several committed student members, one of which will be featured each month.

Throughout her five semesters at CRC, **Kelsey Jacoby** has wanted to get more involved with campus life, but somehow nothing quite caught her interest. Then, this semester, she enrolled in the Global Climate Change class (Biol 351/Geog 305) and found that something she had been looking for.

Professors Sharkey and Scott introduced Kelsey to the CRC Sustainability Committee. Being a part of the committee — even for

only a short while — has given Kelsey more enthusiasm and a stronger drive to do her part to mitigate the effects of global climate change.

Kelsey plans to go to CSU, Sacramento in Spring 2009 to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Business Marketing. Knowing that multiple companies will offer a wide variety of options for green-collar jobs, she hopes one day to work in marketing for a company that pursues environmental issues and sustainability. In her work with the committee now and in her future career, Kelsey hopes she can make a difference.

CRC Student Named 2009 NWF Campus Ecology Fellow Baseline Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Increased Focus on Recycling Coming to CRC

CRC student and Campus Sustainability Committee member, Heather Downing, was recently awarded a \$2000 grant and named a 2009 National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Campus Ecology Fellow. The grant's central objectives are to conduct the campus's first baseline greenhouse gas inventory and to increase awareness and participation in recycling efforts on campus. Geography Professor Debra Sharkey will act as her advisor for the duration of the grant — January 2009 to April 2010.

Heather will work closely with Prof. Sharkey and student members Daniel Fagan and

Elizabeth Gaylord to recruit additional students to achieve the grant's goals. Heather and her student colleagues will conduct outreach efforts to our sister campuses and to local K-12 schools and businesses in an effort to educate others about how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Heather will also join the other 2009 Fellows for a four-day training program at the NWF national office in Reston, Virginia, in March 2009.

According to the NWF Campus Ecology program's website, "Since 2000, [NWF] has awarded 113 fellowships to students across the country, working on projects ranging from

campus wide energy audits to implementing sustainable forestry practices." For more information about the program see <http://www.nwf.org/campusecology/index.cfm>

The Sustainability Committee is thrilled that this grant project has been funded, and we are especially proud of student committee members Heather, Daniel, and Elizabeth. We wish to commend them for their leadership and for their willingness to take action on this important initiative.

Choose a High Definition TV with energy use in mind

With the February 2009 deadline for digital TVs fast approaching, you may be ready to purchase an HDTV. Please bear energy use in mind as you survey your options: according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, some HDTVs can consume more electricity in a year than a refrigerator!

Of the three available HDTV technologies, plasma is the least efficient, LCD is marginally more efficient, and DLP/rear-projection is the most efficient — using only one-third of the energy that plasma does — but in general, HDTVs use less energy than analog TVs. Remember also that energy use increases with screen size.

Making your purchase easier are the new Energy Star ratings (as of November 2008). Energy Star TVs may be as much as 30 percent more efficient than non Energy Star models.

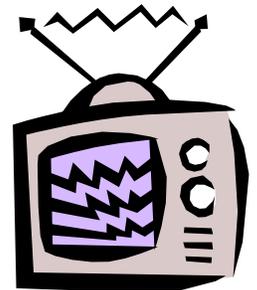
Tips for reducing energy use on your current TV:

1. Unplug when not in use (thus turning off the standby mode).
2. Turn off any quick start option.
3. Reduce the brightness settings and/or turn off any backlight setting.
4. For old analog TVs, buy an Energy Star DTA converter to meet the digital deadline. (The EPA tells us that installing these converter boxes on all remaining analog TVs would be equivalent in terms of energy savings to taking a million cars off the road.)

“High Definition Power Hogs.”

Greentips online. Nov 2008. 1 Dec 2008.

<http://www.ucsusa.org/publications/greentips/>



Gas Mileage Improves with Proper Tire Inflation

(FROM PAGE 1)

Automotive instructor Kevin Rogers said that car tires normally lose about one pound of air per month, so you need to check them often. I found the tires on each of my cars were inflated 33 percent under the manufacturer's recommendations, including the tires I had recently purchased that were inflated by the dealer. Since inflating my tires to the recommended levels, my gas mileage has improved over 10 percent. Even at the present cost of fuel, that means my family has another \$200 per year to spend on the holiday season, a trip

to Disneyland, or a year's supply of lattes! If the cost of fuel rises above the \$4 level, as it almost certainly will eventually, I can give myself a \$400 bonus at the end of each year — that doesn't even consider the savings on tires or all the good I can do for global warming.

Once again, as you surely already know, if everyone takes a small step, it's equal to a lot of big steps.

Read more at

www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/state
www.ecodrivingusa.com

CRC Nature Corner:

Recent Owl Sighting

John Rusmore reports...

If you are leaving campus from the SOC area at dusk, watch out (and listen, too) for a pair of great horned owls in the pine trees on the left (to the east of the walkway).

Perhaps our central quad owls (see Green Scene, Nov. Issue) have moved to new digs!



Why the Hawk is an Apt CRC Mascot

Lizz Gaylord reports...

For those of you who might have thought that our mascot is

actually a particular hawk, be advised: there is no such thing as a river hawk *per se*.

There are, however, seven species of hawk referred to as river hawks because they favor river habitat, such as that around the Cosumnes River Preserve south of campus.

Check around campus and visit the Cosumnes River Preserve and see how many of the following you can add to your life list:

- ❑ Sharp-shinned hawk
- ❑ Cooper's hawk
- ❑ Red-shouldered hawk
- ❑ Red-tailed hawk
- ❑ Ferruginous hawk
- ❑ Rough-legged hawk
- ❑ Swainson's hawk
(endangered)



Look for Red-tailed hawks in the Cosumnes River College vicinity.



Start a Green Tradition with a Living Christmas Tree

(FROM PAGE 1)

ingredients: PVC for needles (petroleum based, non-biodegradable, and carcinogenic); lead as a PVC stabilizer (no explanation needed, I presume); Phthalates in the PVC (hormone-like effects). Hmm, on second thoughts, no thanks!

So what are the alternatives (apart from the bah humbug route of no tree at all)? My husband and I decided on a *living* tree.

A living tree does require a little more care and thought (see "Living Christmas Trees to Treasure," *Sunset.com*, Dec.

1998), but the ecological advantages are numerous.

Yes, you do still have to drive somewhere to buy your potted tree and you do have to haul it home, but once home it can continue to give back for years — to your family at Christmas and to the environment when it goes back outdoors. And if you don't have a spot in your yard for the tree when it gets too large, you can always donate it to your community church, park, or school.

We were surprised to find living trees for sale for as little as

\$15 at Orchard Hardware Supply (these were pretty tiny, of course) and in a variety of increasing sizes at ascending — but reasonable — prices. Even Long's Drugs had living trees, but they were all large and over \$100. I tried searching for retailers online with little luck: I suggest you simply go to your nursery or gardening store of choice and see what it has to offer. If it's too late this year, there's always next.

Fröhliche Weihnachten!



Cosumnes River College Sustainability Committee

Members:

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 Cindy Erickson
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 Cath Hooper
 Hiram Jackson
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 Ruth Oxman
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 Susan Scott (Co-chair)
 Debra Sharkey (Co-chair)
 Michelle Smith
 Christine Wagner

Student Members:

Heather Downing
 Daniel Fagan
 Elizabeth Gaylord
 Kristiana Hauge
 Kelsey Jacoby

Newsletter:

Cindy Erickson
 Cath Hooper

*We welcome your
 comments, observations,
 and story ideas.*

News In Brief...

Children's Center Ecology Program Update

CDC teacher Lora Wardlaw tells us the children have made great progress on their quest to "save the earth." Their plastic-bottle tree has grown to about three feet tall — and is still growing.

You can help:

1. Save your plastic water or soda bottles and drop them off at the Child Development Center from 7:15am to 5:00pm.
2. Come visit the classroom and help add to the tree.
3. Request a recycling container for collecting plastic bottles in your department.

Your help is greatly appreciated!



Campus Recycling Efforts: Can you beat this?

Since our last issue, the SOC faculty has sent for recycling one box of overhead transparencies and another of batteries. Also, SOC faculty are starting to recycle inkjet and laser cartridges, cell phones, and other electronic gadgets.

Thus far, Brenda Buckner (our recycling czar) has sent in 72 inkjet and laser jet cartridges gathered from across the campus. Not bad, you might be thinking. But when you consider all the staff, faculty, and students who have the ability to

participate in the recycling efforts of those items, perhaps not as good as it could be.

So go home and seek out those old ink cartridges and see if we can't do even better in the future!



Plan Now for Earth Week 2009

Planning for Earth Week 2009 was launched at the committee's first meeting in December.

Faculty, as you plan your spring courses over the winter break, please consider incorporating environmental themes or projects and encouraging your students to participate in Earth Week activities during the week of April 20 – 24.

The main quad events will take place on Wednesday, April 22. Contact chair Julie Oliver at oliverj@crc.losrios.edu for more information.



More Recycling Tips

Wondering what to do with those dead CFLs (compact fluorescent light bulbs) — which, by the way, should not go in the trash?

Following is a URL to a list of recycling locations in Sacramento: http://www.cityofsacramento.org/utilities/solid-waste-recycling/residential/residential_battery_and_fluorescent_lamp_recycling.cfm