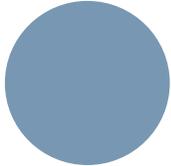




CRC's GREEN SCENE

A monthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College



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Reusable Pens an Option for CRC?

Debra Sharkey reports...

Over the past three weeks, faculty members in the SME Area have been testing AusPens—eco-friendly, refillable whiteboard markers developed in Australia and made by Eco-Smart Products. Initial reactions have been unanimously positive: we much prefer them to the Dry Erase markers we've been using (and throwing away by the basketful).

There's nothing not to like about AusPens. They are non-toxic and very low-odor because they do not contain xylene, a toxic chemical commonly found in other whiteboard markers such as those made by Dry Erase.

Xylene, the source of the

strong odor in Dry Erase markers, is what allows the ink to dry quickly on the whiteboard. However, as we've all discovered, leaving the cap off a Dry Erase pen for even a short time renders them useless—as the xylene escapes. The smarter AusPen gets around this problem by using a denatured alcohol base so, while the ink still dries quickly on the board, the pen doesn't dry out—even if its cap is left off for 24-48 hours.

And there's more! AusPens are made from 100% recycled material, they're refillable, and they're recyclable. A set of six AusPens comes with six bottles of ink, each of which refills a pen about 40 times. The double-sided,

(SEE 1 AUSPEN, PAGE 2)

Earth Week 2009!

Take time to visit the quad and other Earth Week events Tuesday through Saturday (April 21 – 25).

Documentary film maker Larry Lansburgh will give the week's keynote address, "Is Earth Day Really Necessary? A Hard Look at Global Realities," on Wednesday from 1:30–2:50 pm in the Recital Hall (see story page 3).

Other talks include

"Fall of Great Civilizations" (Amanda Wolcott Paskey, Anthropology, Tuesday, 9:00–10:20 am, LRC105) and "Alternative Energy" (Trey Hudgins, Biology, Thursday, 12:00–1:20 pm, L112).

Display tables will line the quad on Wednesday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, with student displays, ecological footprint testing, solar cooked foods, and green and non-profit agencies. Live events on Wednesday include *Storytelling to Celebrate Mother Earth* from 10:00–11:00 am and *Open Mike Nature Readings*

(poetry and short prose) from 11:00 am–1:00 pm.

The week ends Saturday morning with a Creek Week Cleanup led by Dave Hodapp (see story page 5).

For more information about Earth Week, contact Julie Oliver at 691-7581 or oliverj@crc.losrios.edu.



1 AusPen + 1 Refill = 40 Dry Erase Pens

(FROM PAGE 1)

replaceable nib is made of durable felt. If the nib becomes too squishy for your tastes, turn it over, and use the other side—voilà, a fresh tip!

Eco-Smart Products claims that one set of pens (with ink refill bottles) will last as long as 246 Dry Erase markers. It also claims that over the life of a single AusPen, at least 20 pounds of non-biodegradable garbage (the PVC cylinders which encase Dry Erase markers), together with the pens' toxic chemicals, are diverted from landfills. Appropriately, the motto printed on each pen is "Penfill Not Landfill."

Erasing these pens with a microfiber cloth or a traditional dry eraser is a snap. In fact, if all faculty using a particular classroom were to switch to AusPens, whiteboards would be easier to clean because their ink leaves less build-up. The ink is water soluble, so a little water is all it takes for the deeper cleaning that may occasionally be necessary—no need any more for costly whiteboard cleaner.

When I asked Custodial Supervisor Tony Cartwright whether a shift from chemical-based Dry Erase cleaner to rags and water would be a problem for our janitors, he said, "That's a no-brainer."

CRC Faculty who have tested AusPens are ready to

switch. Kimberly Williams-Brito (Math) reported, "I absolutely love them. After a week off, I really noticed how strong the odor is from the current markers. It was nice to have an odor free marker (students noticed this too). Probably the best gift today was that these pens do not leave my fingers and palms blackened with marker residue! When can I have a set?!"

With all of these benefits, is there a downside? The only obstacle we've uncovered is the high initial cost of the pens: \$5.00 each when purchased in a 12-pack or \$69.95 for a set of six in different colors, with six ink refill bottles, in a convenient carrying case.

However, when we consider that CRC's cost for a Dry Erase pen ranges from 41 cents to \$1.42 each (depending upon pen color) and that teachers in North America pitch 500 million of them annually, with heavy users throwing away one to two pens per week, we can easily justify the higher initial cost of the refillable AusPen. The AusPen is clearly the more cost-effective option over the long run, and the other benefits are icing on the cake!

As a result, the SME Area is considering replacing Dry Erase markers with AusPens. Due to

the initial cost outlay, it may be necessary to phase in the refillable pens over time. With each AusPen purchased, however, SME faculty will smile a little more widely knowing they're working not only in a healthier setting but also for an organization that values both cost-effective and environmentally sustainable products. What's not to like about that?

Interested staff should stop



by the Green Consumer table on the quad on Wednesday, April 22 (Earth Day), between 10 am and 1 pm. A whiteboard and the pens will be available for testing.

To find out more or to demo the pens, contact Debra Sharkey or check the website:

<http://www.ecosmartworld.com>



Filmmaker Lansburgh Gives Earth Day Keynote Address



Above: Larry Lansburgh will speak at CRC on Earth Day, April 22. Below left: Domingo Peas. Below right: Young Achuar woman

Is Earth Day really necessary? Discover the answer to that question as you learn how traditional people are keeping their rain forest as pristine today as it was a thousand years ago.

Join Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker Larry Lansburgh for his compelling Earth Day keynote presentation on Wednesday, April 22, from 1:30 to 2:50 pm, in the Recital Hall.

Lansburgh first looks at the global realities of money and power and how these forces are driving environmental devastation and abuses of human rights.

But at the heart of the presentation is a surprise, a cause

for optimism.

Lansburgh recently made a documentary film about a group of Amazonian indigenous people, the Achuar, who are still living much as their ancestors did. In defending their pristine corner of the Amazon rain forest, the Achuar have come up against the money and power of multinational corporations—and won.

Using scenes from his film, “Dream People of the Amazon,” Lansburgh analyzes the successful strategies of the Achuar people in defending their way of life against the destructive forces of the industrialized world.

Read more at <http://www.larrylansburgh.com/>.



Book Review

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle

Michelle Smith reports...

Did you know that most fruits and vegetables travel about 1,300 miles from farm to table? Processed foods travel even further.

Some folks question why our food is so well traveled and what the ecological, environmental, and social implications of current U.S. food culture might be.



Barbara Kingsolver tackles these issues head on in her most recent work, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. Relocating from Arizona to the more fertile pastures of Appalachia, Kingsolver recounts her family's yearlong quest to become "locavores"—people who eat food grown and raised at home or on neighborhood farms.

An idealist with a realistic approach, Kingsolver admits to a limited number of indulgences (*A year without chocolate or coffee? Yeah, right!*), but her family stays true to the basic premise. This includes local staples for every meal as well as for holidays, vacations, and even a rocking semi-centennial birthday celebration that keeps the crowd dancing until the wee hours of the morning.

Kingsolver tells the story in a way that is intriguing, with

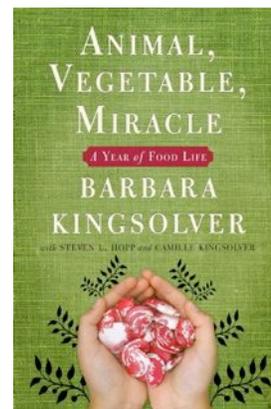
refreshing language and a healthy dose of humor. Her eldest daughter, Camille, shows tremendous potential as a writer, contributing numerous pieces that offer the young adult perspective as well as some savory, seasonal recipes.

Interesting, factual sidebars come courtesy of Kingsolver's husband, Steven L. Hopp. Even Lily, their nine-year old daughter, contributes to the project by selling organic chicken eggs. (Her business, Lily's Lovely Layers, is a highly successful endeavor intended to raise funds to buy a horse.)

The trials and tribulations of these aspiring locavores are both entertaining and enlightening. Dispatching a Queensland Blue pumpkin, a gorgeous albeit stubborn variety, involves the skilled hands of a surgeon (Kingsolver's father) and the brute force of a woman with a machete (Kingsolver).



Consuming copious amounts of squash requires creativity with a little deception—unsuspecting fourth graders eagerly ask for second helpings of chocolate chip cookies,



entirely unaware of the zucchini content. And the rare and mysterious mating rituals of the domestic turkey are described in full and without euphemism (although some poetry is in order). Readers are spared little detail on this journey.

Kingsolver recognizes the average reader is unlikely to drop the book to pick up a garden hoe. As a result, she sprinkles the book with tips on how to contribute to local food economies, such as buying at farmers markets and food co-ops. Ultimately, Kingsolver and family present a persuasive message promoting awareness of our buying power as consumers and generating mindfulness of the food we put into our mouths. We are, after all, what we eat.

For more information, check out the website at

www.animalvegetablemiracle.com





Green Sleuth: Following the CRC Paper Trail

Cory Wathen reveals the truth about CRC paper consumption...

Would you have guessed? Each year CRC

- makes over 7 million copies in Printing Services, about 20% single-sided;
- makes over 1 million copies on area copiers, nearly 85% single-sided;
- makes about 1 million copies on student and office printers/copiers, mostly single-sided;
- consumes roughly 7 million sheets of paper in total, the equivalent of approximately 800 trees;
- spends nearly \$50,000 on paper alone.

Editor's note: See the evidence for yourself on Earth Day. Look out for Julie Elliott's paper display on Wednesday on the quad.

What can you do?

- Reduce your class handouts and other printed material by
 - posting documents and information on electronic message boards or websites;
 - distributing information by e-mail;
 - replacing multi-part NCR forms with electronic forms or procedures.
- Print all multi-page documents double-sided.
- Limit your use of area copiers as they are twice as expensive to operate as the copiers in Printing Services.
- Adjust fonts, margins, and other formatting to reduce the number of pages.

Act Locally: Join Saturday's Creek Week Cleanup

Dave Hodapp reports...

Any material dumped into a storm drain goes directly into a creek or river—a source of our drinking water—and creeks filled with trash can clog channels and create local flooding.

That's why last year, on Saturday, April 26, 15 CRC students and staff—in conjunction with CRC Earth Week 2008 and the annual Sacramento Creek Week Cleanup—spent the morning cleaning a portion of Strawberry Creek adjacent to Illa Collin Park, east of the CRC campus. The group collected a dozen bags of trash from the creek and its banks.

You can join the CRC team again this year, on Saturday, April 25. (Students earn a free T-shirt!) Sign up in the Student Development Office (L103) by 5:00 pm, Thursday, April 23. More details about where to meet and what to bring will be available when you sign up.



CRC students and staff collect trash at Strawberry Creek near the CRC campus last April.



Cosumnes River College Sustainability Committee

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 Debra Sharkey (Co-chair)
 Michelle Smith
 Christine Wagner

Student Members:

Heather Downing
 Daniel Fagan
 Elizabeth Gaylord
 Kristiana Hauge
 Onyi Ibeabuchi

Newsletter:

Cindy Erickson
 Cath Hooper

News In Brief...

Earth Hour

Thanks to Richard Chiolero, CRC's Biology Lab Tech, for bringing to our attention Earth Hour, a small but symbolic gesture towards acknowledging concern about global climate change and making a commitment to finding solutions.



Earth Hour took place at 8:30pm local time, on March 28. At that time, individuals (including *Green Scene* editors!), businesses, governments, and organizations around the world were invited to turn off non-essential lights for one hour. The *Sacramento Bee* acknowledged the event the next day: participating US cities included San Francisco, Phoenix, and Chicago. Why not Sacramento?

Sacramento's apparent lack of interest and involvement was evident in its failure to publicize the event adequately. We'd like to see CRC and the *Green Scene* do a better job of getting people involved next year.



CRC Graduates Given Option to Take "Graduation Pledge" in May

CRC Sustainability member Andrea Salmi reported in February's *Green Scene* on efforts to get an optional Graduation Pledge approved for this year's graduates.

Good news! Approval has been received to include an information letter about the pledge in packets sent out to approximately 800 students eligible for graduation. Approval has also been received to include the following statement in this year's graduation program:

"This year's graduating class was given the choice to pledge their commitment to social and environmental responsibility. The pledge reads: 'I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work.' Those students wearing a green ribbon this evening have pledged their commitment."

Thanks, Andi, for shepherding through this important initiative!



Check This Out

Drop by the Library Foyer to see the Earth Day display of green products and books created by student Heather Downing and CRC Librarian Lily Kun.

We're on the Web!

Look for archived issues
 of the
GREEN SCENE
 on the CRC homepage
 under the
 Events and Culture Link.