



SSF hikers at Lover's Leap, Lake Tahoe. Left to right: César Aguirre, Tenley Lillegard, Mariah Vasquez, Jaime Gonzalez, Sierra Cavallaro (CSUS), Emily Bollinger (CSUS), Makayla Hopkins, Meghan Scurti, Natalie Guerra, and Tyler Spilman (sitting).

# CRC's GREEN SCENE

A bimonthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College

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## LRCCD Sustainability Summit

Steve Coughran reports...

On November 6, staff and students from across the Los Rios District gathered in the Student Center at American River College to share accomplishments and strategize future collaboration. Though our sister colleges move ideas from grass roots effort to potential reality along very different organizational paths, we have many interests in common: recycling, water-bottle filling stations, community gardening, composting, resource conservation, inclusion of sustainability in curriculum, and so on.

After a morning roundtable discussion, Joe Fullerton, Energy Manager and Sustainability Coordinator for San Mateo Community College District, applauded our collective initiatives before presenting on the work being done in his three-



college district. We were heartened by his recognition of what he called our “random acts of sustainability,” and the idea that our ongoing efforts, in concert with a district manager like himself, could institutionalize a culture of sustainability in Los Rios that we could take pride in. Of particular note, his programs save the San Mateo District significant amounts of money above and beyond the cost of his position.

*From ugly to motivational: ARC's trash-can art project will transform old, pebbledash-fronted trash cans by painting sustainability-inspired student artwork on the reverse sides.*

(see District, Page 2)



## District Sustainability Summit

(From page 1)

Although many of us tend to feel frustrated and overwhelmed by the obstacles and challenges we face in institutionalizing sustainability, I, and I believe others, came away from the meeting encouraged and inspired.

This optimism for moving our ideas through levels of district management was revisited last week at CRC's own WINN Center. Look for details in the next issue of the *Green Scene*. ♦

## SSF Students Find Inspiration At Fall Leadership Retreat

*Jaime Gonzalez reports...*

Environmental student activists from across the state made their biannual pilgrimage to the Hastings Natural History Reservation, near Carmel Valley, for the 2015 CSSC Fall Leadership Retreat in November.

The California Student Sustainability Coalition is a broad network of student sustainability organizations throughout the state. Managed and coordinated by students and recent alumni, the CSSC strives to implement policies and programs at various institutional levels that enhance the three key components of sustainability: ecology, economy, and equity.

CSSC leadership retreats serve as a critical space for creating statewide solidarity, working on organizational development, and building student leadership. Students from the Cosumnes River College chapter (maintained by CRC's Students for a Sustainable Future) were among



on organizational development, titled "From Broke to Boss: Improving Any Org." It felt wonderful to create a space where students could share their struggles and challenges and then help each other find solutions and support.

the 20+ campuses represented at the weekend retreat.

Attendees participated in a variety of programs, including trainings on anti-oppression, campaign strategy, and effective social media communications for organizations. One of the highlights of the weekend for the CRC chapter was hosting a workshop

The retreat wrapped up with a discussion of potential hosts for the Spring 2016 Convergence. After much deliberation, the group settled on De Anza Community College, in Cupertino, as an option. CRC students headed home feeling both excited for the upcoming convergence and reinvigorated by a weekend refuge full of bonding, learning, and growth. ♦



*Above: SSF students Jaime Gonzalez and César Aguirre lead a workshop at the retreat.*

*Right: CSSC leadership retreat members pose for a group photo.*

## Oaxacan Artesan Shares Eco Vision

*Heather Hutcheson reports...*

The Social Responsibility Committee, with the support of CRC's Cultural Competence and Equity Committee, was pleased to present Alma Arreola of Oaxaca, Mexico in October. Arreola shared information about her art form: the elaboration of wood named *alebrijes*.

*Alebrijes* are sculptures made from the branches of copal trees (*Burseraceae*), widely known for their resin/sap which, since pre-Columbian times, has been used as incense in sacred rituals, including *Día de los Muertos* celebrations.

In addition to describing the process of carving and painting the pieces, Arreola also introduced the work of her artisan collaborative: *Ecoalebrijes*.

"Eco" represents the ecological work that the group does to reforest copal in the region. Arreola explained that this work came only after copal forests were depleted. Presentation attendees learned about the importance of conservation and the imperative of considering the environmental impacts of endeavors, particularly as it takes twenty years for a copal tree to mature from seed.

The collaborative is formed of eleven families. The children of these families are educated in the care of the copal forests as well as in other local conservation efforts. Moreover, according to Arreola, students from Stanford and San Jose State University, among others,

spend time in the region to learn about and participate in the reforestation efforts, including visiting fledgling forests and planting seeds in recycled containers in the spring.

In Advanced Composition and Critical Thinking, students spend a significant portion of the semester working on a proposal for a solution to a problem. Arreola helped us to see that the best solution to most problems begins with education. ♦



*Above: Alma Arreola displays alebrijes for sale.*

*Above right: This hawk, one of the largest pieces the couple has created, was custom-made to pay tribute to CRC's mascot.*

*Right: Alma's husband, Saúl Aragon, carves a sea horse from copal wood.*





## Transit Tales: A Reader Shares Her Commute Story

*Heather Hutcheson reports...*

I take light rail to work on Thursdays, Fridays, and the occasional Tuesday. It is a thirty-five-minute walk from my house to the stops at 39th or 59th. Then, I have to change trains at 16th. My commute these days is more than quintupled, but I make time for the adventure.

In fact, one Thursday night, having left campus later than usual, I found myself in an almost empty car headed downtown. I enjoyed the space as I knew the train from 16th would be overflowing with commuters.

Transferring, I braced myself for the crush of people.

I was pleasantly surprised to find a spot to sit. However, my legs were conspicuously in the aisle. My headphones in, I was relaxing to Silvio Rodriguez's "Ojalá" when the stranger behind me cupped my shoulder.

Removing the song from my head, I turned to see who had a hold of me. A woman looked into my face and said: "We are getting off at the next stop." My mind raced. *Do I know this woman? Does she think she knows me? Am I being kidnapped?* I could muster

only an "Okay?" as I began to plot my escape.

Twenty very long seconds later, it came to me that she was offering me her seat, and the "we" was the stranger and her partner. As quickly as possible, I thanked her and watched with relief as they headed off into the gloaming.

I realized that I have certain expectations about public transportation, chief among them this: No touching. ♦

*Editors' Note:* We want to hear your tales of riding light rail—or other forms of public transit. Send us your stories!



## CRC Students Sign Petition To End RT's G4S Contract

*Maggie Coulter of Sacramento Peace Action reports...*

*"A safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation.... At the same time, protecting human rights helps to protect the environment. When people are able to learn about, and participate in, the decisions that affect them, they can help to ensure that those decisions respect their need for a sustainable environment."*

-- United Nations Special Rapporteur

At the recent CRC SHAREfair, dozens of CRC students learned about and took action for the SacRideHuman campaign, an effort to get Sacramento Regional Transit to end its contract with the British-Danish global security

company G4S, a corporation involved in violations of human rights, international law, the rights of the child, and the environment around the world.

G4S's profiting from and complicity in such abuses have been reported by the American Friends Service Committee, Defense for Children International-Palestine, Corporate Watch, the *Guardian*, and others. In fact, its abuses are so egregious that the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Gates Foundation, university organizations, and others have divested from or refused to do business with G4S.

CRC student fees include a portion that goes to Regional Transit for its expenses, including its multi-million dollar contract with G4S. For more information and to sign the petition asking RT to drop G4S, go to [www.SacRideHuman.org](http://www.SacRideHuman.org). ♦

## Calls for Action at Local Climate-Change Town Hall

*Cath Hooper reports...*

A lively crowd of concerned citizens gathered at Sacramento City College's Student Center on Saturday, November 14 to participate in this year's Town Hall on Climate Change: Creating Our Future, hosted by 350 Sacramento and endorsed by 32 other local groups, including CRC's Students for a Sustainable Future. Last year's Town Hall led to a Climate Action Plan. This year's focused on "transition[ing] our community away from fossil fuels and towards a collaborative, regenerative fossil-free future."

### Inspiring Long-Term Vision

In his keynote address, Davis author Kim Stanley Robinson argued that a transition of this kind will require a change to the rules that run our economic system (which he likened to a "multi-generational Ponzi scheme"). Climate change improvements would follow from a carbon tax, a progressive tax on corporate and personal *assets*, full employment through public sector jobs, as well as free public education, preschool through college. At the same time, he said, California's drought problems could be addressed by returning the Central Valley to its former state as a floodplain, benefiting all living things. Robinson sees these changes as a long-term vision. It may take a multi-generational effort, he said, but that's no reason not to get started.

### Pursuing Diversity

Other words of optimism were shared by Assemblyman Kevin McCarty, elected just one year ago to represent Sacramento's 7th District. McCarty



*Participants wrote on ribbons what they will miss if nothing is done to combat climate change.*

applauded the passage of the recent climate change measure, but pointed out that assemblymen from Yolo, Arden-Arcade, and Elk Grove districts had been unwilling to take a stand against big oil. He also urged those present to pursue equity in the environmental movement, a feeling echoed by a number of other speakers over the course of the day. (Indeed, a quick look around the room showed a majority white and senior presence.) Environmental justice was a repeated theme from several panelists, one of whom declared, "We need more faces like mine in the conversation." Another young attendee commented with exasperation: "I'm tired of being the youngest person in the room."

### Tapping Into Youth

Panelist Chanowk Israel, who left corporate America to become an urban farmer, spoke of the benefits of his change in lifestyle, from a reduction in carbon footprint to a

"hyperlocalization of the food supply." His call for leadership programs that involve and educate young people was echoed by participants in some of the afternoon workshops. The workshops reflected 5 areas of interest: Keep It In The Ground, Model Sacramento, It's Our Right of Way, Green and Just Economics, and The Future. Each workshop group generated a plan of action for the coming year, and the Town Hall closed with a sharing of the results. These include spreading the word about Naomi Klein's book and film "This Changes Everything," the setting up of a transit-riders union, and the formation of the Sacramento Student Coalition for Environmental Justice.

### Visualizing Our Role

At one point in the proceedings, Brenda Ruiz of the Sacramento Food Policy Council sliced an apple in an exercise she called "Eat the Earth." After slicing away the  $\frac{3}{4}$  that is water, the  $\frac{1}{2}$  of what remains that isn't habitable, the  $\frac{1}{4}$  of what then remains that isn't arable, and finally the part under the mantle that isn't accessible, she held up the tiny remaining piece. "Everything we do to this little piece of apple skin is affecting everything else on the rest of the apple skin," she reminded us. This and other stark reminders of the increasing amounts of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere provided a good call to action, but equally important are these words of inspiration offered by some of the panelists: Use your power to increase the power of others; Stand up for the Earth. ♦

## Cosumnes River College Sustainability Committee

### Members:

Dave Andrews  
Steven Coughran  
John Ellis (Chair)  
Cindy Erickson  
Maninder Ghuman  
Cath Hooper  
Bob Johnson  
Christina Ocrant  
Sarah Pollock  
Andrea Salmi  
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Debra Sharkey  
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### Student Members:

César Aguirre  
Jaime Gonzalez  
Jose Patino

### Newsletter:

Cindy Erickson  
Cath Hooper  
Christina Ocrant



We're on the web!

Look for archived issues  
of the

**GREEN SCENE**  
on the CRC Homepage

## Tiny House Competition Progress Report

*John Ellis reports...*

Cosumnes River College will be one of 12 California colleges to participate in the SMUD "Tiny House" Design/Build Competition in October 2016. The competition promotes an interest in energy conservation, energy efficiency, green building, solar technologies, and sustainable practices. The CRC team is currently completing construction documents and expects to begin construction in Spring 2016.

During the week of competition, to be held at Sac State, students will exhibit their houses to judges, the media, and the public. (CRC's house will be located between Stanford's and USC's.) The houses will be judged in ten categories, including architectural design, livability, communication, affordability,

energy efficiency and balance, appliance load, technology/electrical and mechanical systems, transportation, sustainability, and documentation.

Students interested in participating in the construction phase should contact Professors Ryan Connally (construction) or John Ellis (architecture). ♦



*Shown above is one of five CRC student designs in progress. The final design will be selected and built based on competition criteria.*

## Carbon Offsets For A Clean Conscience?

*Cath Hooper reports...*

Perhaps you heard it on NPR too. Lourdes Garcia-Navarro and Laura Migaki were heading to the Amazon to report on the link between climate change and deforestation. (I'm sure you see the irony in that too.) They wondered if carbon offsets could legitimately compensate for the damage incurred by their 15,000 miles of flying. The Planet Money team investigated and decided the offsets could—provided one chose them carefully. In fact, a mere \$50

bought the 88 trees needed to offset all those miles.

But if you were thinking you don't need to feel guilty about flying anywhere any more, think again. There's a downside to carbon offsets too. They make us think we don't need to change our carbon-emitting behaviors, but we'll slow climate change only if we do.

So, if you absolutely must fly, by all means buy carbon offsets. But better still, don't fly at all. ♦



## News In Brief

### What's good for the GOOS?

Reuse, that's what! The Math Center needs scratch paper for tutoring sessions, and can put your GOOS (good on one side) paper to good use. Please feel free to send your one-side good paper their way via campus mail—or stop by with it if you are in the vicinity (LRC 205). ♦