

CRC's GREEN SCENE

A bimonthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College

Photo by Jim West

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Earth Day Speaker Promotes Citizen Science

Andi Salmi reports...

Mary Ellen Hannibal, author of *Citizen Science* and other books, gave the Earth Week 2017 keynote address on April 19. Her talk inspired audience members to become citizen scientists—non-scientists who contribute their observations of plants and animals in nature to online databases, thus helping to document the distributions of species. Over time, this data can reveal changes in populations that might indicate problems such as habitat loss, effects of climate change, or other disruptions.

Hannibal noted that we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction event on our planet, with extinctions occurring at an accelerated rate, due primarily to habitat loss. Observations by citizen scientists can be used to detect changes in the early stages and to influence the creation of reserves or other means to protect species before it is too late.

An easy way to become a citizen scientist is to download the app iNaturalist, developed by a UC Berkeley student, that allows one to take a photograph of an organism and to upload the photo along with the date, time, and GPS coordinates



indicating the precise location. Over 3 million people use the app, helping to create a valuable resource on iNaturalist.org that is available to citizen and research scientist alike. Hannibal encouraged us to participate and pointed out that all of us have an enormous potential to contribute to the understanding of nature, help scientists with their research, and influence public policy.

Hannibal was inspired to write about nature after learning about extinction. She wants others to become aware of the problem of loss of habitat and biodiversity. She also urged us to become immersed in nature, to use all of our senses to more fully appreciate it, and to foster a love of certain places, be it our own yard, a park, or a nature reserve. We can all, she assured us, become citizen scientists in our own neighborhoods. ♦



OneBook Author Prescribes 'Vitamin N'

Lesley Gale reports...

The culminating event for this year's OneBook program featuring *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* was author Richard Louv's visit to Cosumnes River College, during which he chatted individually with faculty, staff, and students, signed books, and responded to questions related to his book in a Recital Hall interview with CRC student Nick Kopp.

As the book title suggests, Louv's primary concerns were the maladies resulting from children's disconnection from nature and from too much time with technology, including atrophy of the senses, anxiety, depression, attention disorders, and echophobia—a fear of nature resulting from children's early awareness of natural disasters before they can experience the joys of nature. After reflecting on his own childhood haven in the woods behind his house in Missouri, which was eventually bulldozed, Louv expressed his fear about disappearing natural spaces by



Prof. Lesley Gale poses with student interviewer Nick Kopp and author Richard Louv at the OneBook reception.

asking, "Will future generations have that place to go to?"

But optimism prevailed as Louv described the "New Nature Movement" that has grown since the publication of *Last Child in the Woods*. The movement encourages families and schools to make unstructured play in nature a priority. Louv mentioned

Family Nature Clubs that have formed in his home town of San Diego, groups that plan outings so that parents who didn't grow up in nature can support each other and overcome their fears of nature through "safety in numbers."

When it comes to busy families, Louv emphasized that nature time should not be another to-do item on the list but an essential part of the daily routine: working, living, and playing outside. Louv also offered good news for schools across the country that are finding that better test scores correlate to more natural spaces in and around schools. With tech companies exerting more influence in public schools, Louv encouraged citizens to insist on more nature time for children: "No economic force will stand up for nature in schools; it will have to be a social force." With the enthusiasm and engagement demonstrated by the Recital Hall audience, our community has reason to be optimistic. ♦

TOP Club Contributes to Earth Day

Valentina Bianchi, TOP President, reports...

Committed as it is to taking good care of our environment and addressing problems caused by our current food system, CRC's TOP (Thrive on Plants) club was honored to present eight different tables at this year's Earth Day celebration on the CRC Quad. Several TOP members provided valuable information to CRC students, faculty, and staff about saving water with our forks, cooking healthful and

quick foods, and growing herbs and vegetables.

Prof. Timaree Hagenburger, the club's advisor, and other TOP members shared ideas for boosting the nutrients of common recipes, provided a plant and whole-food based shopping list, and demonstrated that this lifestyle can even save money! TOP also hosted the movie *Sustainable*, which illustrates the importance of sustainable food production. ♦

CRC's TOP (Thrive on Plants) club is all about supporting students as they find their way to better health and enhanced quality of life. This active club provides a platform where students can exchange plant-based and whole-food recipes, learn how to cook, and explore strategies in pursuit of a healthy, sustainable lifestyle.

TOP members meet every Wednesday at noon (Winn-102) and welcome you to bring lunch and join them for cooking demos, TOPlucks, great discussions, and meaningful connections!

CRC Celebrates Earth Day



Top left: Debra Sharkey's Geography 300 students display green products.

Top right: At one of their eight tables, TOP club educates students on the health benefits of plant-based home-cooked meals using a crock pot.

Left: Amanda Walker, duplicating, helps student Faiza Shaheen make recycled paper.

Below: High school students from the Sacramento area compete during the SMUD Solar Car Race.





CRC Earth Day Highlights Sustainability



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CRC
USES **24**
WHITE PALLETS OF
PAPER PER YEAR

CRC
USES **17**
COLOR PALLETS OF
PAPER PER YEAR

THAT'S 41 TONS or
82,000 LBS. OF PAPER

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Top left: The Sacramento EV club displayed a number of electric vehicles, including this sporty Tesla Roadster.

Top right: Inspired by reading OneBook's Last Child in the Woods, Prof. Lesley Gale's English 300 class told nature stories at the storytelling booth. Here, student Austin Enmark shares his tale.

Left: CRC's paper usage has increased from 36.25 pallets last year to 41 pallets this year, an increase of almost one million copies.

Below: Rick Schubert, philosophy, leads students, faculty, and staff in tai chi and stress reduction.



Alice Waters Champions Slow-Food Culture

Sandra Carter reports...

If it's farm to fork, it must be healthy, right? "Not so fast," says Alice Waters, one of the founders of the 1970's food revolution, pioneer of California cuisine, and visionary chef and founder of the organic restaurant Chez Panisse in Berkeley, CA—and now the premier leader and inspiration of today's healthier eating and school gardens movement. On March 12th, at the Harris Center for the Arts, Waters emphasized that 'farm-to-fork' food should be organic to be truly healthy.

In her opening presentation, Waters spoke about her upcoming book, *Coming Back to My Senses*, which contrasts 'fast-food' with 'slow-food' culture, and explores how our views about food shape every aspect of our larger culture. Appropriately, she sees fast-food culture as concerned with food uniformity, speed of preparation, 24/7 availability, and excessive consumption—the more the better! In contrast, slow-food culture centers on principles of ripeness and the unique qualities of foods, and on the land and the human relationships that produce these qualities. Equally, slow-food

culture values the arts of cooking and handicrafts and highlights qualities of creativity, patience, and variety.

Later in the evening, Waters sat down with the *Sacramento Bee's* Marcus Crowder to discuss her early life, the beginnings of Chez Panisse, her career, and her current projects. Interestingly, she preferred not to dwell on the current political and economic environment regarding the loss of small farms and their preservation, GMO foods, Monsanto's control of seeds and pesticides, corporate food production, factory-farm pollution, obesity, food waste, and other complex issues.

Instead, she spoke with inspiration about educating younger generations about the importance of food purity and of maintaining close human interaction with the agricultural lands that sustain us. She highlighted her school garden program, integrated curriculum, and food education programs around the nation. Finally, she encouraged the audience to support those small farms, organizations, and restaurant owners that bring those slow-food cultural

values to our tables.

To me, her words bring to mind a local organic restaurant called East SMF (3260 J Street), owned and operated by husband-and-wife team Rhonda and Tony Gruska. All of the foods and beverages served in this comfortable and well-lit space are organic, locally sourced, and non-GMO. The principles that sustain East SMF are rooted in food politics and the slow-food culture. Local, seasonal, organic vegetables fill the menu of soups, salads, pasta, fish, meat, and desserts.

In my experience, it has not been unusual for a customer to be seated at a table while a local farmer enters carrying a bin of freshly picked, organic kale or a flat of free-range chicken eggs. The food moves straight from the organic farm, where it has been picked with the farmer's hands, into the kitchen, where chef Tony Gruska does his culinary alchemy from scratch. Customers are encouraged to get to know the local farmers who supply the healthy food. East SMF and Rhonda and Tony Gruska would make Alice Waters proud! ♦

SACRAMENTO REGION

MAY IS BIKE MONTH

RIDE YOUR  DURING THE MONTH OF MAY

Drew Carlson reports...

May is Bike Month offers an opportunity to celebrate the unique power of the bicycle by signing up for the Bike Month Challenge. Log the miles you ride your bike in May—to commute, to run errands, or just to ride for pleasure—and see how many miles you (and your colleagues and friends) can accumulate. Experience the difference riding your bike regularly can make in

your health and outlook. You can also win prizes while increasing the awareness of bicycling in our community.

The Employer Challenge is open to all CRC Staff and Faculty. When you register at <https://mayisbikemonth.com/login.php>, make sure you list Cosumnes River College as your employer. Let's see if we can beat our sister campuses for miles ridden in May!

Hope to see you out on your bike this month. ♦



Sacramento Marches for Science



Debra Sharkey reports...

On April 22nd, coinciding with Earth Day, 10 to 15,000 people took part in the March for Science in Sacramento. Amongst these marchers were representatives from the Los Rios Federation of Teachers, as well as staff and students from Los Rios colleges. The Sacramento event also featured a



lineup of speakers and musicians and a science education exhibit area. At the same time, marches were taking place in over 600 locations across six continents, including cities, national parks, and small towns.

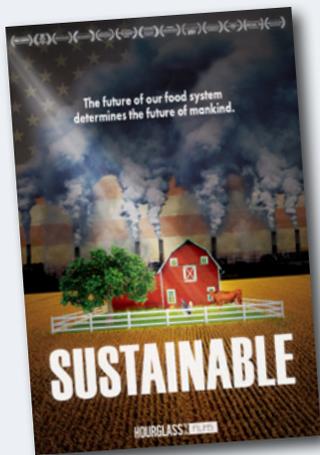
Why were all these people marching? Event organizers described it as a non-partisan movement to “champion

science for the common good.” According to Ed Yong, writing for *The Atlantic*, the event had around 21 stated goals. Some people marched to show support for science and scientific education in an age of growing science denialism. Others were more politically motivated to show opposition to the current administration’s penchant for delivering “alternative facts,”

denying climate change, and favoring legislation to defund targeted scientific agencies as well as basic research.

Whatever the individual marcher’s motivations, participants were united in their desire to deliver a public message—that science is important to all of us. ♦

Film Review: *Sustainable*



Bradley Correia, NUTRI 300 student and Thrive On Plants Club member, reports...

Depleted soil is spreading across the world at an alarming rate. The documentary film *Sustainable* (shown

by TOP club during Earth Week) explains how important it is to keep soil teeming with life so that the microorganisms in soil can work to keep plants healthy. Without these living organisms, the soil will become depleted quickly, in as little as a few years even. The film discusses carbon sequestration and the role of organic farming in keeping microorganisms alive by encouraging a plant’s root system to deposit, and more importantly to keep, carbon in the soil.

While many farmers may not have the knowledge or resources to pursue this method of farming, I was intrigued by the film’s focus on the small farmers who do, and the restaurant owners, chefs, and bakers working with them

whose passion produces high quality, local products.

I found myself thinking about my own connection to farming. My father was a third-generation corn farmer in the Sacramento Delta. The peat soil on his land—formed in swampland and decomposing over thousands of years until rich in nutrients—was amazingly fertile. One could see this by its very color and texture: extremely dark, almost black, yet somewhat light and fluffy. I wonder now how the industrial farming practices my father used—nitrogen and a harmful organic phosphate—damaged the microbiology in that soil. Not only was he destroying the peat, a natural

(see Not So Sustainable, Page 7)

Not So Sustainable

(From page 6)

resource of immeasurable value that took thousands of years to create, but he also put himself in danger by using harmful chemicals (once nearly killing himself after exposure to one of these poisonous substances).

My father was eventually “sold” on the use of RoundUp-ready corn. The company Monsanto, known for its genetically modified (GM) crops and the herbicide RoundUp, also designed RoundUp-ready corn (and soybean) seed, the idea being that the farmer would use less herbicide. However, now the farmer needs only one herbicide—RoundUp—which kills off everything except for the GM corn plant.

RoundUp, and many other fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides, are destroying beyond repair the



microbiology in the soil, disrupting the soil's ecosystem. No plants have evolved to live in such conditions. What we need are tight regulations to control the use of such products.

I know my father took great pride in feeding his country. It was not he but the system that is flawed. If the benefits of locally and organically grown vegetables were more recognized, then consumers might even be inspired to start a garden at home. This is surely the path to sustainability. With near certain irreversible global warming taking place, sustainability in all its forms may be the key to survival for mankind, as well as for wildlife. ♦

Watch the film *Sustainable* for free with a Netflix subscription, or rent it for \$2.99 from Amazon.com. Also available on Apple iTunes and Google Play.



Green Scene Awards



We're on the web!

Look for archived issues
of the

GREEN SCENE

on the CRC Homepage



Kudos to...

Andi Salmi for her contributions to sustainability at Cosumnes River College. A founding member of the Sustainability Committee, Andi served as committee chair and tirelessly as Earth Week chair for many, many years.

We wish her well on the next leg of her life's journey. ♦

Cosumnes River College Sustainability Committee

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