Compostable Times

Issue 5 "All the news that's fit to recycle." November 2006

Michigan at Climate Crossroads

Former Michigan State Representative, Chris Kolb, addressed the second Forum of over seventy stakeholders representing industry, government and non-governmental organizations from across the State of Michigan. They gathered on the University of Michigan campus all day October 25, 2006 to collectively review the effectiveness of nine greenhouse gas (GHG) emission strategies from economic, environmental and implementation perspectives.

Kolb outlined the urgency for legislators from both sides of the aisle to craft policies to that are founded on "solid data and analysis" to address a reduction of Michigan's annual emissions that now exceed 60 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. "We spend $27 billion a year on energy in Michigan and $18 billion of that is shipped out of the state to import fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas. If we can keep part of that $18 billion in the state through more efficient energy use and the development of home-grown energy supplies, those dollars can re-circulate throughout our economy and build wealth and create jobs here at home. National studies show that Michigan by investing in solar and wind energy could generate over 9000 jobs and ripe the benefit of over $3 Billions in new investments in our state."

This second stakeholder Forum was convened by the Center for Sustainable Systems (CSS), a research center within the School of Natural Resources and Environment at the University of Michigan as part of the Michigan at a Climate Crossroads: Strategies for Guiding the State in a Carbon Constrained World Project (MCCP) sponsored by the National Environmental Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trust and the Energy Foundation. A key aspect of this project is to engage the broad constituency who would be affected by any GHG reduction policy the State might implement, including Manufacturing, Transportation, Energy, Agriculture, Building, Non-governmental Organizations, and Government sectors.

At the first Forum held in January 2006, a vetting process using open dialogue on the scientific merits of 75 possible GHG reduction strategies bounded by the constraints of business, identified nine State-level strategies which the stakeholders ranked as worthy of full environmental and economic analysis:

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Rosina Bierbaum, and Chris Kolb, Michigan State Representative at the Michigan at a Climate Crossroads stakeholder forum held at the University of Michigan on October 25, 2006.

In this issue:

THE SOCIAL CORNER

Wanna see the home of RoboCop, Axel Foley and Eminem? Wanna relax over a beer with friends? Wanna learn something without reading? Student gov has some great events comming up in the next month so be sure to check out student gov's website at:
http://www.umich.edu/~snrestug/

The Deanstalk

Rosina's fall findings...

It's been a busy but very exciting fall!

As I mentioned last edition, I was among a small number of academics invited to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative in New York in September. This gathering of world and national leaders from government, business, non-profits, and academia is designed to serve as a non-partisan catalyst for action, bringing together global leaders to find innovative solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges. It was an exhausting but awe-inspiring 2 days. Stay tuned for more details as our plans for the first National Summit on Coping with Climate Change develop!

I've also had the opportunity to address a number of diverse groups in the past month. In September, I keynoted the U.S. Association for Energy Economics/International Association of Energy Economics (USAEE/IAEE) 26th North American Conference, where economists from the public and private sectors were considering energy challenges in a world of changing costs and technologies. My presentation on science and technology policy noted that, in science policy matters, our nation is failing: the overall health of science and technology (grade B+ and falling); public understanding of science (C- and falling); respect for the integrity of science (D- nadir); and policy informed by science (C- and falling).

I also spoke to 100 members of the Wayne State University Society of Activity Retirees on the topic of climate change, and talked about environmental journalism with Emelia Askari's ENVIRON/NRE 320 class. The exchange was made all the more lively by the addition of Department of Geology Professor Emeritus Henry Pollack, a noted expert on climate change, and Detroit Free Press cartoonist (and climate change skeptic) Henry Payne.

I joined Andy Hoffman, Barry Rabe and Perry Samson for the Erb Institute's panel discussion following the showing of An Inconvenient Truth. It's a testimony to the power of the movie's message that, even though it has been playing in theaters nationwide for many months, it screened to a near-capacity crowd of 500 at Mendelssohn Theater, and the Q&A session following continued for nearly an hour (and would have gone longer had we not needed to end it).

In early October the Dean's Speaker Series was proud to host Dirk Wascher, Guest Professor of Sustainable Design at SNRE and a se-

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nior researcher in the Landscape Center of Alterra, as the JJR lecturer, speaking on "Landscape Assessment Tools for Sustainability Impact Assessment." Later in the month, we welcomed SNRE alum Marty Cargas, Vice President of Government Affairs at Anheuser-Busch International, Inc. as our homecoming speaker. Marty discussed "Beer and the Environment: Brewing for a Better Future."

Our next speaker, co-hosted with the Center for Sustainable Systems and the Office of the Vice President for Research, will be Lord John Browne, Group Chief Executive of BP, who will present the 6th Annual Peter M. Wege lecture entitled "Sustainability: A Practical Agenda." While BP has faced a number of safety and maintenance issues recently, the company has historically been a leader corporate environmental responsibility, so Lord Browne's lecture, at 5:00 pm at Rackham Auditorium on November 14, should be of particular interest to the SNRE community.

Speaking of alums, our Development staff hosted well-attended alumni receptions in Boulder, CO and in San Francisco, CA in October. These events represent a welcome opportunity for us to connect to our many far-flung alumni and for our alumni to connect with each other.

SNRE has again joined the Yale School of Environmental Studies, Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences, and the Donald Bren School of Environmental Science and management at the University of California, Santa Barbara to host joint recruiting events, this year in San Francisco (October 24) and Atlanta (November 16). Andy Hoffman and Bobbi Low hosted the event in San Francisco; Don Scavia and I will do the honors in Atlanta. These events are aimed at attracting students to careers in the environment.
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I'm pleased to announce that six of the symposia at the February annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) will be presented by SNRE faculty – the most from any university at the meeting!

The Business Office and the SNRE Staff Rewards and Recognition Committee hosted a Halloween potluck, complete with prizes for best costume. Congratulations to the first-place team from OAP, always ready for "s'more"!

Jim on Academics, Bass fishing and Blue Laws...

September and early October have been busy months. My recent tasks, in addition to helping coordinate the orientation program for new graduate students, have mainly involved the continued excellence of SNRE's academic programs. In particular, much work has been focused on the Landscape Architecture program as well as the Terrestrial Ecosystem program.

The Landscape Architecture program is up for reaccreditation in December by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board, part of the American Society of Landscape Architects. In preparation for this accreditation, SNRE has had a series of reviews, including a review by our own Landscape Architecture faculty, by internal U of M faculty, and by an external advising board. These reviews have focused on the LA program, its current structure and plans, and ways to further integrate the LA program into SNRE. All of these interactions have been extremely positive, with each group complimenting the quality of our current faculty and students and the importance of our mission to blend ecology and design. The reviews have helped us consider options for the LA program, which are now being proposed to the review board from ASLA. Just this week, Rosina and I proposed changes in the LA degree to the Executive Board

Continued on next page...

Jim... continued from page 3...

of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, and we await approval of the 44-credit-hour requirement for an MLA, with added core courses. This MLA program will parallel our modified MS program and require more community courses by all students. We believe this is an important step in aligning MLA students more closely with the remainder of the School.

In addition to this planning, the Executive Committee has been evaluating where we stand in terms of faculty positions. As a result of extensive deliberations, the Committee has presented to the faculty a proposal to hire a new position in Landscape Architecture as well as another in Terrestrial Ecosystems. The Landscape Architecture position will focus on landscape planning and sustainable design, while the Terrestrial Ecosystems position will focus on plant ecology and paleoecology. We hope both positions will move forward for hiring during the winter term with a start date of September 2007.

I would be remiss to finish this article without writing something about the Michigan Bass Fishing Team. The Bass Fishing Team (for which I am the coach) attended the annual Big Ten Tournament in Madison, Wisconsin, on Sunday, October 1. Eight Big Ten teams competed in the tournament, and Michigan placed third. This is a very good showing for a team that is largely comprised of new members and students who have not had a lot of experience in bass fishing. I experienced two disappointments related to the Bass Fishing Team: one was that only one new graduate student joined the team, and the team we had in Madison was only undergraduate students. I have always valued the participation of grads on this team, in order to make it a more mixed group. The second was that the city of Madison does not allow the sale of alcohol in stores after 9:00 pm. As a result, we had a dry camp the first night. In spite of this, a good time was had by all, and the Bass Fishing Team seems to be moving ahead. I would certainly like to see more graduate students involved in the future.

Are you a gunner and already working on setting up your winter classes? Not sure which ones to take? To get the skinny on what's in and what's out, check out the links page on the student government website, now accessable though the current student link.

Dan's feelings about being back.

It's great to be back in the classroom and interacting more regularly with students and colleagues again. I was honored to have the wonderful opportunity to have dinner with five randomly selected students week a few weeks ago. The program that student government is running, in which groups of students take an SNRE faculty member to dinner, is a great way for faculty to get to better know a cross-section of students with whom they might not ordinarily interact (in addition to whatever benefits the students may get!). I think it's also an important means to create connections and build community within the school.

I was truly inspired by the breadth of experience the students I met with have brought to the School and their enthusiasm. It drove home to me the fact that the range of opportunities available to students for an education that prepares them to invent and implement solutions to environmental problems are much greater now than they were 20 years ago, when I was beginning on my path through graduate school. It's interesting to reflect on how my own path might have been different, had the range of opportunities been available at the time (not that I know the answer). It also reinforced for me the notion that SNRE and the Uni-

Continued on next page...

versity of Michigan is one of the great centers of education in this field. We talk about this fact in recruiting and development, but it's not until you spend time with the students that it becomes so obvious. And, make no mistake; the diversity of students in the School is an important reason for the fact.

You might be interested to know that I'm actually trying to find time to continue with my own research as well, with substantial help from able students. One project that is just now underway is a joint effort with a new research unit of Michigan Technological University in Southeastern Michigan, which was recently acquired from the Altarum Institute, a non-profit research organization. They proposed to develop remote sensing based methods to evaluate the effectiveness of USDA policies aimed at soil and habitat conservation in the State of Michigan, with the expectation that these methods would be applicable nationally. It's challenging to discern the effectiveness of these policies at landscape and regional scales because these landscapes are changing anyway do to a broad range of demographic, economic, and ecological processes. We are contributing an analysis of land-use and land-cover change in the State that will serve to provide a backdrop on which the effectiveness of these policies will need to be evaluated, and just in the early stages of identifying and compiling available data. Talk to me sometime if you are interested in learning more. Email Dan at Danbrown@umich.edu.

Michigan and Climate Continued from 1.....

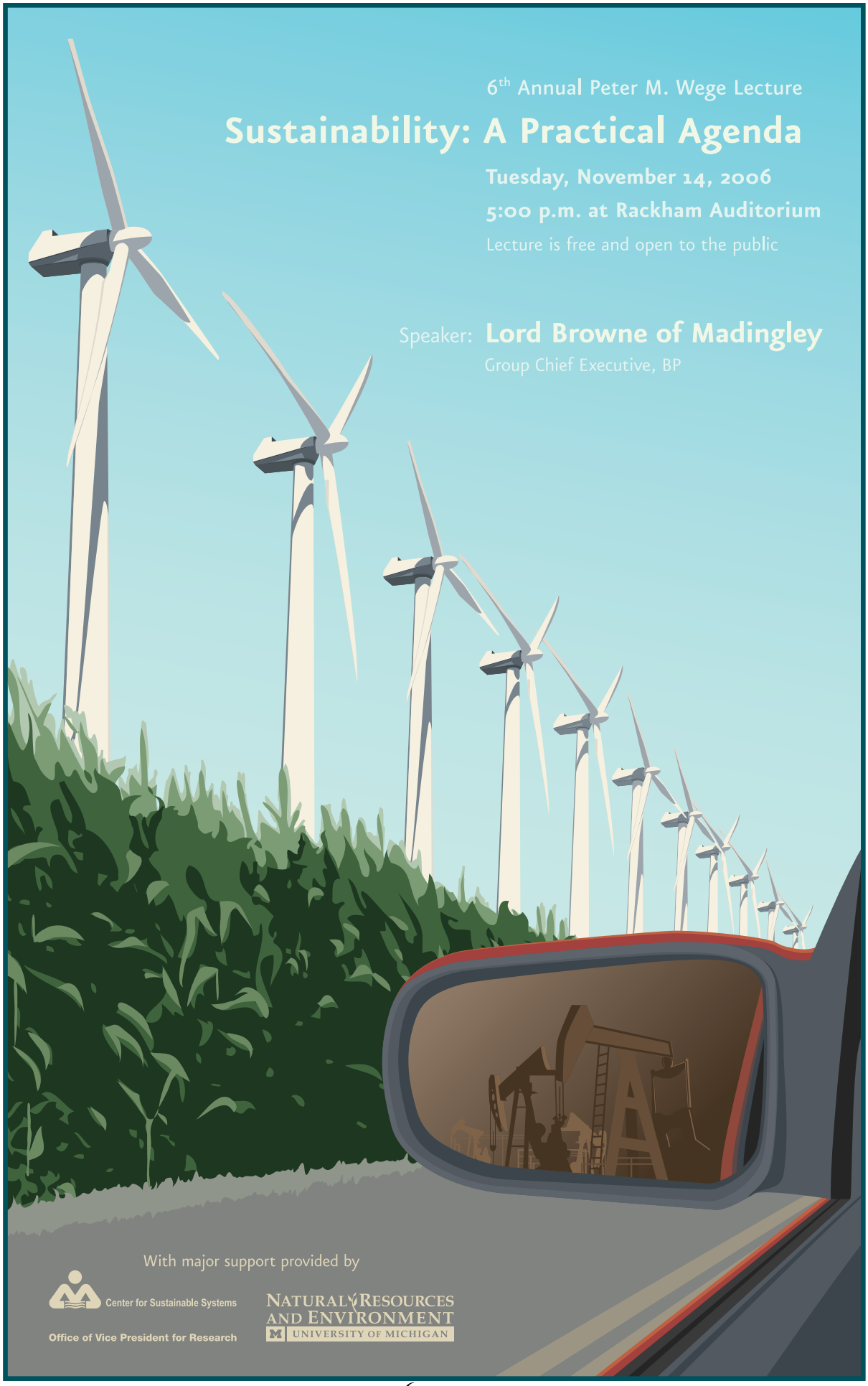
1 Renewable Portfolio Standard/ Clean Energy Portfolio
2 Demand-Side Management
3 Alternative Fuel Infrastructure/ Flex/Bio Fuels
4 Carbon Sequestration/ Soil Management
5 Revise Building Codes/LEED or Energy Star
6 Mass Transit Enhancement and Development
7 Production Tax Credit for Renewables/ Net Metering
8 Tax Credit for Alternative Vehicles Technologies Incentives for Production and R&D
9 Tax Incentive Programs

The second forum presented the modeling results which followed analysis of the GHG reduction potential and the impact to Michigan's gross domestic product and job creation for each of these prioritized climate change management strategies with the objective of building consensus across the diverse interests. As Kolb observed, "business and environmental interests must team up to move these issues forward. Coalitions across political, economic, business, social lines must be forged."

In 2005, the Center for Sustainable Systems conducted the first inventory of greenhouse gas emissions for the entire State of Michigan which indicated that GHG emissions rose 9% from 1990 to 2002. In 2002, 33% of Michigan greenhouse gas emissions resulted from the production of electricity in the state, 26% resulted from transportation, with industry contributing an additional 17%. This inventory highlighted opportunities for action and provided a baseline for measuring progress, ultimately serving as the catalyst for launching the MCCP study. Results of the MCCP study will be provided as a report and policy briefs for the Governor and Legislators to address a carbon-constrained future.

SNRE in the News

On November 9, the Erb Institute hosted a conference entitled Corporate Strategies to Address Climate Change. The conference brought business leaders from around the world to Ann Arbor to discuss the findings of a report of the same title released in October by the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. The report, which was authored by Professor Andy Hoffman was also contributed to by SNRE MS students including Doug Glancy, Mike Horn, Scott Pryor, Greg Shopoff and Mark Shahinian. For the full report go to pewclimate.org.


6th Annual Peter M. Wege Lecture
Sustainability: A Practical Agenda
Tuesday, November 14, 2006
5:00 p.m. at Rackham Auditorium
Lecture is free and open to the public
Speaker: Lord Browne of Madingley
Group Chief Executive, BP
With major support provided by
Center for Sustainable Systems
Office of Vice President for Research
Natural Resources and Environment
University of Michigan

news you can grow with

Dude, Where's My Opus?

Graduating students have, during the past several years, stated that completing their opus (often in the form of a master's project, but many students also write a thesis or practicum) was one of their most rewarding experiences at SNRE. A master's project, specifically, provides a chance for students to work directly with a client - often an environmental non-profit or corporation - and learn more about an industry, environmental issue, etc., while providing meaningful consultation services and creating a network of contacts. That being said, the opus option isn't necessarily the best choice for everyone, and this marks the first year that entering students in most fields of concentration will have a non-opus option. Students will be automatically enrolled under the "opus" option and, come winter term, individuals will have the opportunity to petition to drop this requirement. (Students are required to remain enrolled as "opus" during the fall term, to ensure that individuals give adequate thought as to what their options are, and what might work best for their individual situation). In its place, students will need to take at anywhere from 3-10 additional credit hours (depending upon the specific field of concentration) which relate to their intended course of study, as well as receive permission to drop the opus requirement from their advisor. More information can be found at http://www.snre.umich.edu/degree_programs/index.php#masters, from Sondra in OAP, or by talking with individual faculty advisors.

Cultivating Community Update

By Mary Beth Dechant

The mission of the student-run organization Cultivating Community is to promote closed-loop agriculture at the University of Michigan. Since its origin in 2005, the organization has been working to develop an efficient system for vermicomposting, which uses worms to convert food scraps into organic fertilizers for growing vegetables.

Currently, Cultivating Community's worms reside in six 50-gallon plastic bins. The bins have produced much of the humus used in the organization's three gardens. But Cultivating Community hopes to increase the amount of food waste brought in for composting, which would be difficult with the current system due to the relatively small size of the bins. To address this problem, UROP student Sarah Duffy worked with Julie Cotton, the former Cultivating Community coordinator, to design an outdoor vermicompost system that could handle larger amounts of wastes.

The plan is straightforward – a 9' x 8' trench, 3' deep – a home deep enough for the worms to miss the frost line and remain active through the winter, transforming food wastes into a rich humus. Alongside Cultivating Community garden managers Jess Palmer and Mary Beth Dechant, several undergraduate volunteers graded the bottom of the trench to a slight slope and lined it with a durable plastic material. This design allows for the by-product of the decomposition process, a nutrient-rich liquid known as 'compost tea,' to be collected and used to fertilize the gardens. At an upcoming workday, the sides of the trench will be reinforced to prevent erosion.

Cultivating Community hopes to have the vermicompost system fully operating by the end of November. More helping hands are always welcome, so let us know if you are interested in volunteering with the organization! Email Mary Beth (mdechant@umich.edu) or Jess (jmpalm@umich.edu) for more information on volunteering.

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Katrina research at SNRE

Heather Morgan, MS 2007

Students listen to Ken Ford, President of Saint Bernard Citizens for Environmental Quality

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, ravaged the Gulf Coast in ways that had been predicted and awaited by many. A series of decisions made over centuries exacerbated the effects of the two disasters making them both natural and man-made. "Damaged by Katrina, Ruined by Murphy Oil" read handmade signs across Saint Bernard Parish, Louisiana referring to this distinction. This coastal parish is one of the first to feel the effects of sea level rise and serves as the intermediary between the New Orleans urban landscape and the Gulf of Mexico. Additionally, this community hosts two oil refineries, making it the most densely populated area housing refineries in the state. This fact proved fateful when Katrina's storm surge lifted one local refinery's storage tank off of its foundation, releasing one million gallons (25,000 barrels) of oil into the community - the largest residential oil spill in the United States, if not the world. Rescuers report having to boat through the oil slick in order to pluck Saint Bernard residents from rooftops and deposit them in neighboring Orleans Parish. After the storm, cleanup of private property was a slow process. Additionally aggravating returning residents were the unanswered questions; "What about my front yard, or what about my neighbor? They cleaned up my front yard, but they didn't clean up the house next to me. Should I let my children play there?". Sediment sample results were difficult if not impossible to obtain from Murphy. Residents complained that reciept of samples were contingent upon a resident's relinquishing the rights to sue and that often the results were not meaningful despite Murphy's protest that toxicologists were on hand to answer residents' questions.

In an interview with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, a lead toxicologist grappled with how best to respond to individual concern over the safety of the oil spill area: "If you sample [one] property, do you have to sample everybody's property, and then do you have to sample the whole New Orleans area? And then, who does it?" While the resources may not be readily available to test every property, it is imperative that government agencies effectively communicate what they do know in addition to what they cannot know. A local toxicologist and attorney commenting on the agency response to the spill stated, "I think that the realization that this is a neighborhood, because this is so unprecedented, hasn't really hit them yet." SNRE students set out to address an obvious information gap between residents, the state environmental agency, the EPA, and the parish government. The project's summer work sought to gauge citizens' concerns, knowledge, and information base in addition to how they felt the refinery, the parish government, and responsible environmental agencies felt the situation had been handled. Professor Noel Tichy, Director of

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Even the Clampetts woudn't be happy with this oil under their house.

the Global Business Partnership as part of his Global Corporate Citizenship Initiative gave funding to enable the group's survey and associated outreach. With this funding, students were able to sample over 200 residents using a 158 point survey asking, for example, whether residents had received the information they thought necessary to make informed decisions about returning to the parish and if not, what information they thought necessary to do so. Students also quantified the quality and quantity of contact residents had with various agencies regarding the Murphy Oil spill. Student researchers conducted more than 13 qualitative interviews with key non-profits, representative citizens, and local, state, and federal government representatives. Students toured much of the parish with residents, listening to their thoughts and concerns and familiarizing themselves with residents' sense of community and place. They also sought to link local toxicologists with the community to facilitate understanding of the issue.

This semester, as project members analyze the results of the survey and the qualitative interviews as well as develop a community guide to industrial contamination, they continue to maintain contact with residents as the community progresses through the healing process. Murphy has recently settled a class action lawsuit totaling 330 million dollars, but this settlement includes damages already disbursed in private settlements, alleviating the responsibility of Murphy Oil to clean up. Although a buyout option seeks to provide a sort of buffer zone within the four streets adjacent to refinery property, it remains questionable as to whether this offer will justly compensate residents outside the buffer zone, but within the official impacted area. Equally doubtful is whether the settlement will have any real effect regarding future safety practices in the event of a storm or other comparable event. More than one year later many residents remain skeptical and do not know whether to remain in the parish.

In its final year, the masters project aims to provide residents with the tools they need to better understand the risks associated with exposure to contaminants that may be present in the parish. Ultimately, students hope to enable residents to feel more confident in their decision to stay or to leave the parish. Students are doing what they can to document what is a relatively untold story. Unfortunately, the implications of an oil spill of this extent,has received little recognition, and the future of the parish remains hazy. In the words of a parish councilman, "I'm not sure that in many cases this is considered newsworthy…wars [are] going on all over the world right now. The evening news, …doesn't talk about health issues in Saint Bernard Parish. It talks about Iraq, Hezbollah, and …North Korea…" The question for concerned residents of Saint Bernard is will anyone ever recognize the problem enough to fix it?

SNRE STORIES

(What would it be like) to be a "real" Landscape Architect

kfoo, MLA 2007

Martha Schwartz's Drumlin Park in Minneapolis

From October 6-9, sixteen Landscape Architecture students attended a joint American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) conference in Minneapolis. The conference created an opportunity for students to meet practitioners from around the world, participate in professional practice meetings, and attend general education sessions related to the field. These meetings, as Jennifer Dowdell, a 3rd-year MLA student, commented, "covered everything from restoration, reclamation, sustainable sites, and data mapping, to such global projects as the Millenium assessment. It seems clear that the general direction of the profession as a whole is moving toward a focus on green building and environmentally sensitive design and development." This year was the first time that ASLA has so strongly emphasized ecological design and planning, and the presence of IFLA in the conference underscored this focus through a variety of speakers and practitioners working

According to Dave Laclergue, a 3rd-year MLA student, this exposure to practicing professionals was the most valuable aspect of the conference. An "Inside the Studio with…" series allowed conference participants to hear prominent design professionals share slides and stories about their projects. These ranged from high-profile Manhattan designer Ken Smith to the ever-controversial Martha Schwartz and Steve Martino, a designer in the Southwest specializing in native plants.

Mary Walton, a 3rd-year MLA student, noted that "it was especially helpful and enlightening to hear of current design projects and the process practicing landscape architects go through from the design phase to installation." Walton explained that it gave her a much better understanding of the types of projects she would like to be involved in upon graduation. Oliver Kiley, 2nd-year MLA student, added that "everyone [he] talked to spoke highly of the program and said that [Michigan students] come out with a very unique set of skills and abilities."

Students also met with alumni at the conference, who buoyed this

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"Spoonbridge and Cherry" by Claes Oldenburg & Coosje van Bruggen

sense of connection to and accomplishment in the professional world. These included Joseph Howard, Senior Landscape Architect at H.T. Harvey & Associates, who specified his firm's need for professionals capable of carrying out restoration and reclamation-oriented design projects. Isaac Brown, Urban Designer at EDAW in Los Angeles, commented that "SNRE provided [him] with the extremely important combination of ecological and design education. The current development climate…in California has extensive opportunities for applying this combination of skills."

Some students also selected to interview with design firms at the conference. Sheara Cohen and Tao Zhang, both 2nd-year MLA students, said that interviews were an effective way of 'feeling out' the interview process and finding out about available summer internships. For me, a 3rd-year MLA student, it helped me learn how to present my portfolio work in an extremely succinct way at the same time that I explain my broader interests in the field.

Beyond the conference, the trip was lastly a great opportunity to explore the city of Minneapolis with its extensive open space system, notable examples of ecological design, and the general prominence of public art---most famously the gigantic cherry & spoon. Students also enjoyed a variety of international foods and music shows in our spare time--including Yo La Tengo at the club where Prince filmed Purple Rain. Overall, the conference was a very productive foray into the professional world and fun trip to a new city.

SNRE in the News

A recent Brookings Institution report, compiled with the assistance of a multidisciplinary team, including three SNRE students (Jennifer Austin, Beth Bailey and Kerry Duggan) indicates downtown Detroit is well-positioned for revitalization. Full report available at: http://www.brookings.edu/metro/umi/pubs/20061025_downtowndetroitinfocus.pdf

THE BACKSIDE

SNRES FIRST WHODUNIT

BY SARAH LEVY

I never set out to be a hero. But heroism thrust itself upon me. It wasn't romantic or anything -- the image that comes to mind is a fat cat thrusting itself on a can of tuna. I'm Sarah the Hero, Sarah the Savior. Sarah, whose name shall be Hallowed and Revered in the Halls of Dana Forever?

But let's cut the shenanigans. This isn't a story of Dick Tracy and Tess Trueheart. My business is far more sophisticated than theirs.

The Boss found me on a Monday morning in the middle of summer. She had sounded edgy on the phone, and mentioned that she was already taking a lot of heat from the local fuzz and wanted to commission me for a job before they could really get involved. After we talked, I set up my undercover racket on 440 Church St., a place the SNREds like to call home. Dana Commons is my main headquarters, but I also like the digs on the 4th floor. Natural light. Quiet rooms. Erbers trying to right the world by crackin' down on corporate irresponsibility. I respect that. I like to sit by the edge of the terrace, looking over the side at the mingling in Commons. To be frank, I've learned a lot about this place—about the SNREds—simply through close observation.

On that fateful Monday morning, I knocked on the Boss's office door. A few seconds later she invited me in.

I held out my hand. "Boss Bierbaum. It's a pleasure to meet you."

"Oh, Sarah, I'm so glad you're here!" She exclaimed as she shook my hand. She motioned to a nearby chair.

"So, Boss," I said as I sat down. "What can I do for you?"

"Oh, Sarah." Rosina stood up and walked towards her window. "There's been some trouble here at SNRE. A few days ago, the GSIs from our new core courses disappeared without a trace. We haven't been able to figure out where they went. We suspect some of the first years..."

"You got evidence, or something for me to work with, Boss?" I asked.

She walked back over to her desk and then handed me a sheet of paper. "Here's everything we've been able to compile without getting the police involved. I went over the crime scene myself. I think we've got everything."

I scanned the sheet of paper, and made a mental note to recheck it. No one escapes suspicion, not even the Big Boss.

I looked back up at her. "Well," I said, "I'll see what I can do."

She nodded gravely. "Please, Sarah, please help us. We need to find our GSIs. Who else are we going to find to grade papers from Core?"

"Listen Boss." I stood up, and began pacing in front of her desk. "Before I go out looking for the cons who snatched your GSIs, I gotta couple of things I need to tell you about the way I work."

The Boss nodded again.

"First of all, I'm an undercover detective. This means that I do jobs from the inside. In other words, I need your permission to get enrolled in your program, befriend the first years, earn their trust, and then pop the ones responsible for this."

The Boss looked troubled, but gave me permission with a quick jerk of her head.

"Fine. Second, you should be aware that I take an unorthodox approach to fighting crime. I do things that other agents don't ever think about doing, and aren't even capable of."

"Such as…?" Bierbaum questioned.

"Such as…things that I don't discuss in public," I replied cryptically. "You'll find out soon enough. In the meantime, here's a business card."

The Boss took the card and read it over. She looked puzzled. "I have a question," she said. "On your card, your title reads, "Lord Sarah, S.S.D. What does 'S.S.D.' stand for? And why do you call yourself a Lord?"

I laughed, shook my head, and moved towards her office door. "I'm sorry, Boss." I answered. "Can't tell you that right now either."

I stepped out of her office, closed the door behind me, and readied myself to take on the SNREds.

If you think you guess WHODUNNIT, e-mail Sarah Levy at sarahlev@umich.edu.