



## A Sense of Sustainability

In the wake of new science and global consensus revealing the magnitude of global warming, resource scarcity, toxic contamination, and loss of biodiversity, it has never been more apparent that our policies and practices are damaging the planet. We are hearing that as a society and individuals we have to change course, and according to experts, we have to do it within the next decade.

We will have to cut our greenhouse gas emissions, employ alternative fuels and energies on a large scale, drive less and in more efficient vehicles, recycle more, buy recycled, buy organic, buy local, use non-toxic and biodegradable products, bring our own coffee mugs, and turn off the lights, among other things.

We are asked to do all of these things in order to mitigate the threat of global warming and live more sustainably. But how will recycling and turning off the lights save us from predicted resource shortages and climate catastrophes? And what exactly is sustainability?

While often filled with nuances and ambiguities, sustainability is commonly defined by the 1987 Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*. The report developed guiding principles for “sustainable development” as it is generally understood today. It called for a strategy that united development and the environment – namely “sustainable development,” and defined it as such: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainability is an evolution of the environmental movement of the 1970s in that it expands on the single ideology of humans impacting the environment. It transforms what we think of as “business-as-usual” where environmental concerns are impediments to economic success into a “triple bottom line” approach in which meeting economic, social, and environmental needs is essential to maintaining a competitive advantage be it corporate, academic, political, or personal.

The magnitude of the sustainability movement as a global call to every person and institution is unparalleled. Not since the industrial revolution has there been a transformation as sweeping and large-scale as the shift from growth as maximizing building and economic profits to the philosophy of sustainable development. It is the new paradigm of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Another distinctive feature of the sustainability movement is that there is no centralized leadership. It is global and local. It is driven from “top-down” and through grassroots efforts. From major corporations to investment firms, colleges and universities to households, international partnerships to local organic gardens, practices are changing. The tide is shifting towards a more sustainable future.

We hear about sustainability most often in the context of global warming. The earth's climate has changed naturally many times during the planet's history, with events ranging from ice

## EVENTS CALENDAR

- April 22 Earthday
- May 3 Sustainability Concert  
4:30pm -- 8:30pm, Library quad (rain site bbq in Commons, dessert & music in Grey Cage)
- May 6 Morse Mountain Volunteer Workday  
10:00am Morse Mountain parking lot (off Rte 216 in Phippsburg)
- June 16 Clean Sweep  
8:00am -- 5:00pm, Underhill Arena

ages to long periods of warmth. Never in recorded history, however, has the temperature ranged as high as it has in the last 15 years. Quite conclusively, scientists have reported that human-made greenhouse gases are responsible for the temperature shift. The consequences we can expect from the few degrees difference in global temperature cause by this greenhouse effect are more dire than milder winters. Climate patterns are being disrupted and sea levels are expected to rise significantly. Widespread droughts and floods are predicted across Europe, Africa, Mexico and the U.S. Hundreds of millions of people could be displaced around the globe.

Global warming is the threat and challenge that is marking our shift to sustainability. The call to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, individually and collectively is framing efforts to change our policies and practices from recycling to transportation and building. To date, over 140 nations have signed on to the Kyoto Protocol aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions to 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. Over 180 colleges and universities have pledged to work to make their campuses carbon neutral (Bates included). There are voluntary registries for companies, cities, and states to report their greenhouse gas emissions, and they are being populated with data.

Every effort we make to be more sustainable contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere globally. Reuse and recycling reduces methane emitted from landfills and requires significantly less energy than what is used to make virgin products. Alternative energies (sun, wind, hydro, etc.) do not rely on fossil fuels and therefore energy from these sources does not emit greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and nitrous oxides. Using more fuel efficient vehicles and driving less can significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Buying locally ensures less reliance on transport and therefore less carbon emissions. I could go on. *Every* action we take can minimize our impact and bring us more sustainably into the future.

# Recyclemania Takes Over Bates!

By Emily Grady

For ten weeks this winter Bates participated in *Recyclemania*, a recycling and waste minimization competition among colleges and universities across the United States. For the first time ever, Bates poked and prodded and measured and re-measured its recyclables to determine how many pounds per person the College recycles. From January 28<sup>th</sup> to April 7<sup>th</sup> over 200 colleges and universities nationwide submitted data on a weekly basis to determine 1) who recycles the most per capita, 2) who recycles the most overall, and 3) who minimizes their waste the most.

The overall goal of the competition is to increase student awareness of recycling and waste reduction in a friendly, pro-active atmosphere. “We were looking to generate support for recycling, increase our recycling rate and be the top Maine school competing in RecycleMania” said Julie Rosenbach, Bates’ Environmental Coordinator, “though the last objective was thrown in for pure fun.” Bowdoin, Colby, USM, UMF, and UMO also competed.

RecycleMania was started in 2001 between Miami University and Ohio University to increase recycling and minimize the waste produced by their residences and dining halls. By 2004, seventeen schools were competing, and there was a RecycleMania trophy. That same year, RecycleMania partnered with the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Recycling Coalition (NRC), and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) to expand the competition. By 2006, ninety-three schools were competing, multiple contests were added (per capita, overall, and waste min), and over 17 million pounds of paper, bottles & cans, plastics and cardboard were recycled.

Bates kicked off RecycleMania with a “Wheel of Fortune” environmental trivia game in Commons. Students answered sustainability questions such as *Do staples contaminate paper recycling?* (Answer: no) and won Prizes according to their spin of the wheel including Frisbees made out of recycled Stonyfield yogurt cups, energy-saving light bulbs, reusable “sustainability” bags, and a fleece made out of recycled plastic soda bottles. In March Recyclemania joined forces with Commons once again to bring students the College’s first annual *Trashion Show* which featured clothing designs made from recyclable materials.

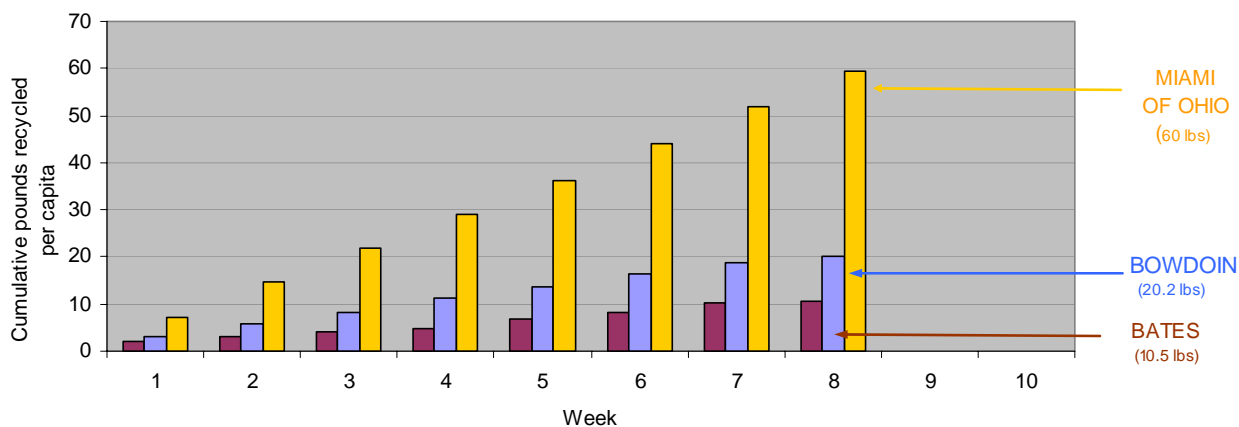


Left to right: Emily Grady, Julie Rosenbach, Chloe Viner, Andie Bisceglia, Amelia Hagen-Dillon, and Liz Miller.

The Environmental Coordinator and a dedicated group of students joined forces to keep the students, faculty, and staff engaged in recycling. Every Tuesday and Thursday students teamed up with physical plant staff to collect the recyclables from the buildings all over campus. Squads of students conducted outreach and asked people to sign a recycling pledge. Students wrote articles for the school paper, and posted fliers with real-time results. At the end of March the Environmental Coordinator teamed up with an Environmental Studies class to conduct a dumpster “dump and sort.” The “audit” confirmed exactly where all the missing recycling was going; in the trash..

The results were clear: Bates needs to recycle more! Despite having one of the most sustainable dining programs in the country (dining diverts over 80% of its waste from the landfill through recycling, composting, food bank donation, and giving scraps to a local pig farmer), Bates lags behind in campus-wide recycling rates. As a result, we will be working to improve the recycling infrastructure in buildings around campus, increasing outreach and education, and working to improve our overall waste management process. Next year we hope to do better!

## RECYCLEMANIA 2007



# What's Going on Around Campus?!

## SUSTAINABILITY CONCERT COMING IN MAY!

The Office of the Environmental Coordinator is sponsoring Bates' first annual *Sustainability Fest* this short term. It's a celebration of spring and an awareness-raising, musically-inspiring danceable, barbeque-included, warm weather, environmentally sustainable event for students, faculty, and staff.

The concert will be held on Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> on the library quad. Dining will be serving its legendary short term barbeque and the sun will be shining! (Although in case it is not and there's too much rain, the barbeque will be held in commons, and dessert and the concert will be in the Grey Cage.)

The concert will feature two bands: *emma's revolution* is a social justice-oriented duo from Washington DC known for their song "Peace, Salaam, Shalom" which they have sung at rallies in NY city and Washington DC. *Grupo Esperanza* is a Latin/Cuban salsa band from Portland ME so good, their music will bring you helplessly to the dance floor!

Music and food, displays and dancing – it's a great way to celebrate environmentalism and join in good ole community fun.

## WHAT'S SO GREEN ABOUT THE NEW BUILDINGS?

The new residence hall and dining commons now under construction are greener than your average building. Once completed they will actually be more energy efficient, use less water, and encourage more recycling than some of their counterparts.

Both new buildings were designed and are being constructed to a LEED Silver equivalent rating. LEED — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — is a US Green Building Council accreditation program for encouraging more energy efficient and overall sustainable buildings.

Some of the sustainable design features include dual flush toilets - yes, pull the handle up for light flushes, press down for heavier flushes; occupancy sensors for lighting, daylighting strategies, stormwater management systems, natural ventilation for cooling, and more.

As a result the buildings are expected to be at least 25% more efficient than code. The trick in ensuring their energy savings will be in how the buildings are used once they come online. In the new dormitory students will have control over their own lights and heating. In both buildings people will be able to see their energy usage with a central monitor that will track fuel and electricity usage. Will all this be enough to encourage the users to turn lights and electronics off when they leave the room?

## NEW STUDENT GROUP FORMS TO ADDRESS GLOBAL WARMING

The Bates Energy Action Movement or "BEAM," is a new on-campus student movement created to fight climate change by promoting carbon neutrality at Bates. Carbon neutrality means having a net total of zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide which are largely responsible for causing global warming.

The United States is the largest emitter of GHGs in the world, accounting for one fourth of all global greenhouse gas emissions. Thus it is especially important to raise awareness and promote local action about achieving carbon neutrality.

The formation of BEAM—created after students attended a climate change conference at Middlebury College — came at a crossroads. A week later Bates President Elaine Hansen signed the *American College and University President' Climate Commitment* pledging to work toward carbon neutrality.

BEAM sponsored "Step it Up," an organized day of action on April 14<sup>th</sup> in which communities across the country converged to demand that Congress cut emissions 80% by 2050. BEAM is collected signatures on petitions which students delivered to the Governor in Augusta.

## BOOKSTORE SAVES RESOURCES AND MONEY BY REUSING ALL PACKAGING MATERIAL

For years the Bates College Bookstore has been saving and reusing packaging materials instead of recycling and buying new. It's been several decades since the bookstore has bought shipping boxes, bubble wrap, peanuts or packing paper.

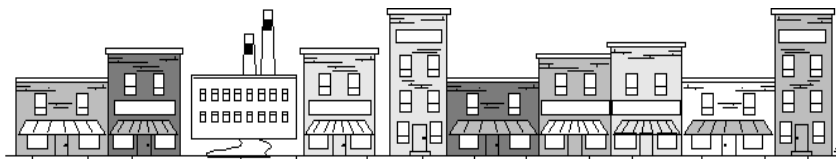
As an alternative, they break down, fold and store packaging received when they order text books and other store supplies. These boxes are used to ship returns to publishers and to ship merchandise orders to customers. In each of these orders, the staff includes a note (on reused paper, of course!) informing the customer that the Bookstore is committed to reducing, reusing and recycling.

They even reuse padded mailing envelopes for shipments. And at year's end, students who are packing to return home can check the cardboard recycling bin on the Bookstore loading dock and take any additional boxes they find there for reuse.

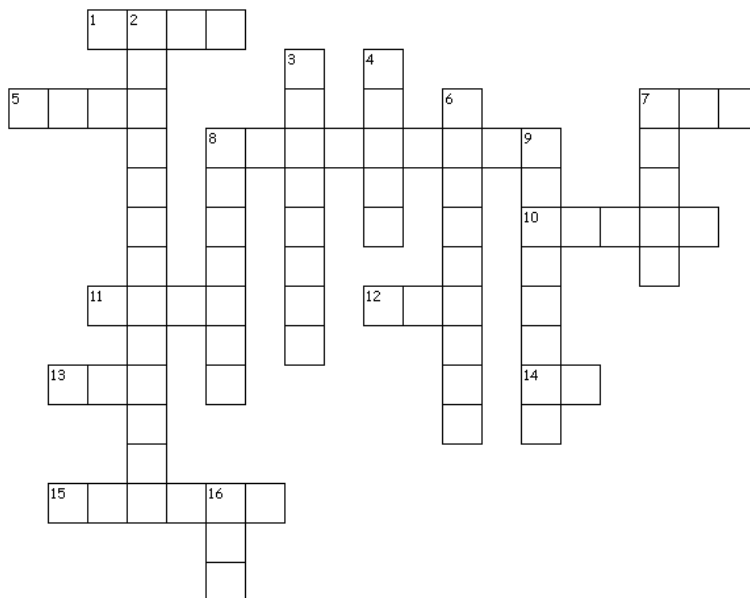
Sarah Potter, the bookstore's director estimates that they probably save \$500-\$800 annually, perhaps more.

About the only thing they buy new is tape (to keep those reused boxes tightly sealed) and padded mailing envelopes for sending small catalog orders.

In addition to saving money and resources, reuse also saves them time. There is no ordering or inventorying, just breaking down and stacking.



# Numbers Game by Chloe Viner



**Across**

1. Enough sunlight falls on the earth every \_\_\_ to meet the worlds energy demand for an entire year.
5. How many recycled two liter PET bottles does it take to produce enough fiberfill to make a ski jacket?
7. Compact fluorescent light bulbs last \_\_\_ times longer than traditional incandescents.
8. One third of all trash generated is from \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Our ecological footprint is \_\_\_ times larger than the planet can manage
11. Incandescent light bulbs lose 90% of the energy they consume to \_\_\_ as a byproduct.
12. How many trees does it take to absorb one ton of CO<sub>2</sub>?
13. Recycling one aluminum can saves one \_\_\_ of gasoline.
14. Can paper cups be recycled in the mixed paper bin?
15. The amount of time it takes the U.S. to spend a million dollars worth of energy.

**Down**

2. If all the earth's water fit in a gallon jug, the amount of fresh water would equal about\_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ paper uses 60% less energy than manufacturing from virgin timber.
4. This material never wears out and can be recycled forever.
6. Fuel made from vegetable oil?
7. Energy recycled from one aluminum can run a TV for \_\_\_ hours.
8. What material requires 100-400 years to break down in a landfill?
9. Recycling one ton of paper saves 42 gallons of \_\_\_\_\_.
16. One quarter of all car journeys are less than \_\_\_ miles.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

*What do you think is the most important thing you as an individual can do to help the environment?*



**Kevin O'Conner 08'**: I think being responsible with our consumption is the most important thing instead of wasting natural resources. As much as recycling and changing our type of energy consumption is important, it is more important for us to learn to use what we need, instead of over consumption.



**Lizzy Rie 09'**: Question everything, lobby, and write letters to your senator.



**Jon Browher 08'**: Recycle and drive fuel-efficient cars. Honestly, I think that's something that's reasonable for individuals, and benefits everyone. I'm big into individual contributions that are part of everyday life.