From Your Editor

Welcome back to our beautiful Cook/Douglass Campus! With the brilliant colors of fall emerging around us, we feel the energy of a new semester blowing in. As recollections of summer settle to take their blithe seat in our memories, the fall heralds a new tide of activity. The EPIB Trail is getting ready for another year which is filled with an exciting group of new writers. From just a small handful of committed contributors, we have now grown to 23 writers, of all majors and years (in these pages you will be able to meet them!). We are very excited to be the new editors of the Trail! Arielle will be using her creative talents to produce the visual designs of the Trail, as well as seeking out interesting and fun facts to share. Although we’re sorry to say goodbye to the Trail’s advisor, Caron Chess, who is on a year-long sabbatical, our advisor Kristen Goodrich will be continuing to provide input and support. If you haven’t had the chance to meet Kristen, you should because she is full of smiles and fun! The newest addition to the team will be the beloved Dr. Clark. He will continue to give us his strange tales and maybe some other life secrets!

Eva and Kimber

In this edition, we have a colorful variety of articles from interesting summer experiences, eco-friendly ideas, alum and faculty interviews, fall events and much more! If you have any questions or comments, or want to contribute to the EPIB Trail, please email our team at EPIBtrail@gmail.com

Happy Trails!

Meet the Fall 2012 Staff

Julia Harenberg
Staff writer
Major: EPIC, U.S. Policy option
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: I’ve been a vegetarian for 16 years

Katherine Fudacz
Staff writer
Major: International Environmental Policy
Grade: Junior
Fun fact: I adore jazz apples, Will Farrell and the ocean

Holly Berman
Staff writer
Major: EPIC
Grade: Sophomore
Fun fact: Loves life music

Jinal Kansara
Staff writer
Major: Psychology
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: I’ve gone sky diving

Thanks To Our Wonderful Staff!

Special Thanks To

Professor Van Abs
Kristen Goodrich
Dr. Clark
Meet The Fall Staff 2012

Scott Sincoff
Staff writer
Major: Journalism & Media Studies/EPIB
Grade: Junior
Fun fact: My favorite part of a Yankees game is singing New York New York at the end :D

Rachel Alm
Staff writer
Major: EPIB and History
Grade: Junior
Fun fact: I adopted a manatee in Florida and love running

Tami Segal
Staff writer
Major: EPIB, Business
Minor: Technical writing minor
Grade: Sophomore
Fun fact: Born in Israel

Lauren Segrato
Staff Writer
Major: EPIB-health options
Minor: public health
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: I walk around campus in a ninja turtle back pack & have a 1 year old son

Mary Ruffner
Staff writer
Major: Sociology and Human Resource Management
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: I love the beach volleyball and whales

Arielle Wortzel
Graphic Designer
Major: EPIB
Grade: Junior
Fun fact: I want to be a sign language interpreter

Evangelina Pena
Coordinator/Editor
Major: Biological oceanography
Minor: EPIB
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: Born and raised in Uruguay

Daniel Pelligra
Staff Writer
Major: Food Science Research & Nutritional Science
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: I love to cook, fish, and race snowboard giant salmon for the Rutgers club team

Kimber Ray
Editor
Major: EPIB—Health options
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: I admire the work Majora Carter and had the chance to hear her speak!

Denise Galianos
Staff writer
Major: Psychology
Grade: Senior
Fun fact: Trilingual
Meet The Fall Staff 2012

Selen Altiokp  
Staff Writer
Major: EPIB  
Grade: Junior  
Fun fact: I don’t like to waste apple cores so I eat them

Nicole McElrath  
Staff Writer
Major: EPIB/Health option  
Grade: Senior  
Fun fact: Both my grandparents’ names are Jane

Renee Leventon  
Staff Writer
Major: Environmental & Business Economics  
Grade: Freshman  
Fun fact: I like to run 5K races that donate to a cause

Wendy Chiapaiko  
Staff Writer
Major: EPIB– Health Option  
Grade: Junior  
Fun fact: I’m a chocoholic!

Will Shinn  
Staff Writer
Major: EPIB  
Grade: Junior  
Fun fact: I love to play paintball

Andrew Holloway  
Staff Writer
Major: EPIB  
Grade: Senior  
Fun fact: My nickname is “Sunshine”

Luke Dougherty  
Staff Writer
Major: EPIB/ Political science  
Grade: Junior  
Fun fact: Studied abroad in Greece

Rebecca Noah  
Staff Writer
Major: Marine Science/ Ecology  
Grade: Senior  
Fun fact: I’m SCUBA dive certified

Cody Beltis  
Staff Writer
Major: Environmental Science  
Grade: Freshman  
Fun fact: I am from Cape Cod, MA, I love pugs and folk music
Faculty Spotlight

Professor Van Abs Interview by Evangelina Pena

This issue of the EPIB Trail will be featuring Dr. Daniel Van Abs, our new faculty addition as a Research Assistant Professor! As a graduate from Cook College in 1977, his class was the first one to be part of “Cook” College for 4 full years! When he was an undergrad, he was part of the Environmental Political Action (EPA) club for 3 years, which was one of the first student-run environmental clubs at Rutgers. For personal enjoyment, he was also part of the Cook College Soccer Club. Even when the soccer club wasn’t competing with other colleges’ Junior Varsity Teams, they would play year-round for the fun of the game. Although over 30 years have passed since he graduated from Rutgers, he says it feels as though he never really left, and he’s truly enjoying his time here again.

Classes that Dr. Van Abs teaches:

- Dr. Van Abs teaches U.S. Environmental Policy and is a faculty advisor for the Careers in EPIB course.

Classes that he will teach next semester:

- He is very excited for the spring semesters upcoming new class that will be called “Raritan Scholars”! This won’t be a typical course; it will include the help of different organizations to offer various internships for students with different interests. Professor Van Abs really believes that students should have a sense of how different organizations work so they can see which aspects of their career they would like to focus on when they graduate—and this class will be a perfect way to do so! The class will meet once a week, it will count as an internship, and students will work with the organization of their choice. It will (hopefully) also be open to more than EPIB majors!

His favorite thing about Cook Campus:

- His favorite part about teaching is “…helping students understand practical application of the field.” His primary focus is on how he can best use his 35 years of experience in the field to help students gain a real-world understanding of what they are studying.

Advice for past, current and future students:

3 Key Thoughts:

- Attain a blend of science and policy (do not focus on just one)
- Get practical experience – figure out what you want to do, and especially what you do not want to do!
- Meet people – form connections
  - Van Abs mentioned that “…every job I’ve had came from a connection I’ve made as a student one way or another,” by going to guest lectures, conferences, and meeting outside people.

Craziest thing someone did in his class or wrote on an assignment:

- A student handed in a totally incomplete paper with notes stating “I need to clean this up more,” and Dr. Van Abs’ response was “Yes, you do”.

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When he was younger, when he “grew up” he wanted to be:

- When he was a kid, he wanted to study chemistry but then changed his mind when he graduated high school. In college he was among those lucky few who are able to do exactly what they want right after graduation, which for him was working in environmental management and then teaching.

If he could travel somewhere it would be:

- Raja Ampat Islands in Indonesia because they are home to some of the most biodiverse coral reefs in the world! And since we are dreaming about our perfect vacation, he said that he would want to be there for 3-4 weeks doing SCUBA diving!

In his free time, he likes to:

- Dr. Van Abs loves to SCUBA dive and also really enjoys photography. He dove in many places throughout the Caribbean, such as St. Lucia, Grand Cayman and St. Vincent. Every time he goes on vacation, he averages about 800 pictures a week!

His favorite place to eat around Rutgers Campus:

- Soho, on George Street.

If George Washington and Abraham Lincoln got into a fight who would win? Why?

- Dr. Van Abs said that “If they got into an argument, Lincoln would win because he is really sharp and intellectual. Washington did not have strong argument skills. On the other hand, if they got into a physical fight, it would be an even match because we are talking about Lincoln, the “log splitter,” and Washington, the “Army guy”.

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? Why?

- Dr. Van Abs said that he would choose “The ability to manipulate the atmosphere, because it would solve a lot of problems”.

Faculty Spotlight
“Bag it!” is a film that has been receiving awards at film festivals across the nation. This film was created by Suzan Beraza and it features Jeb Berrier.

“What started as a documentary about plastic bags evolved into a wholesale investigation into plastics and their effect on our waterways, oceans, and even our bodies.” It has now gone from a documentary to a movement, offering a a ‘Bag it’ club! The ‘Bag it’ movements and clubs are being offered in schools and other related campaigns so people can learn more.

I absolutely loved this informative, yet funny documentary! I ended up getting one of my friends to pledge to use reusable water bottles instead of plastic ones and got my parents to use canvas bags.

“Join the ‘Bag It’ movement and decide for yourself how plastic your life will be.”

Learn more about hosting or attending screenings as well as actions you can take to reduce your plastic consumption at bagitmovie.com.

Watch the movie on the documentary channel or at documentarychannel.com.

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**What’s going on around campus?**

**Undergraduate Research Mixer**

Wed Oct 17th
5-7 pm in the CCC

**Jersey fresh Farm Market**

Every Thursday in October
11 am to 3 pm
Nichol Ave
(next to the book store)

Fall 2012 Go Outdoors Recreation Classes are a great way to have fun on campus! These classes aren’t a weekly time commitment; most are only one or two day activities. Classes like “Bare Bones Backpacking”, “Fall Foliage Hike”, and “Introduction to Outdoor Rock-climbing” are available through October! Sign up at www.recreation.rutgers.edu.
When it comes to sea otters, everyone universally can agree that they are one of the most adorable animals in the ocean. Recently, however, these critters are proving to have more benefits than just a cute face. Ocean acidification is becoming an increasingly prevalent issue amongst the environmental world. This phenomenon is when carbon dioxide in the atmosphere gets absorbed into the ocean. This causes serious threats to the marine and aquatic life.

One simple, yet extremely effective, method that can help cut down on CO$_2$ absorption is the kelp beds found in the ocean. Kelp beds that are “otter-protected” can absorb almost 12 times as much CO$_2$. The problem, however, is credited to the sea urchin that feed on the kelp, which in turn, thins out the kelp bed density, leading to less absorption of CO$_2$ during photosynthesis.

This was recorded and observed with over 40 years of collected data from the areas of British Columbia, Canada, and Alaska’s Islands. As we can see, it is a very cyclical problem developing. This is where the sea otter comes to play in aiding the reduction of ocean acidification.

Sea urchins are an otter’s primary dietary food and therefore, these otters play a significant role in preservation of these kelp beds.

Furthermore, not only by feeding on the urchins help with acidification reduction, but also in preserving kelp forests and they benefit fishermen as well. By keeping the kelp beds thick, they provide a vital habitat for the fish, which in turn is profitable for the fishermen. Once again, this cyclical motif of a chain reaction, demonstrates the need for a proper balance within the ocean.

Sadly, the population for sea otters has dropped sharply over the last few years. In 2005, the Alaskan otter population was listed as threatened in the Endangered Species Act. This was something that most people were unaware of, which is why it is important to shed light onto the significant role that these animals play. As this article discussed, we can see the consequences of what can occur, if even a small factor were changed from this delicate life cycle.

Sea otters play a great role in helping the ocean maintain its homeostatic state and if we do not become more weary of their importance, not only will we find ourselves with a loss of a fuzzy friend, but also, at the hands of great environmental plight.

Article link: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/wildlife/9537353/Sea-otters-helping-combat-ocean-acidification.html
With the upcoming election, both Mitt Romney and Barack Obama are making headlines in every aspect of the media as they scramble for last minute votes. As a demographic, student voters will be extremely important in this year’s race. In order to help the SEBS community decide who really deserves your vote, we’ve compiled some information about one of the top environmental issues of each party’s campaign: energy. While you read the facts, keep in mind that the Trail does not support one party or another, and is not attempting to influence your vote. By learning about each candidate’s energy policy, we hope that you’ll be able to make a more informed decision come election time.

Both parties agree that domestic sources of energy are extremely important to both national security and the growth of the American economy. However, Republicans and Democrats begin to disagree when discussing how to achieve energy independence. Our country’s coal resources are extremely important to the Republican platform. The official GOP website states: “Coal is a low-cost and abundant energy source with hundreds of years of supply. We look toward the private sector’s development of new, state-of-the-art coal-fired plants that will be low-cost, environmentally responsible, and efficient. We also encourage research and development of advanced technologies in this sector, including coal-to-liquid, coal gasification, and related technologies for enhanced oil recovery” (gop.com). The Obama administration, however, has put a much larger focus on developing sources of clean energy. The official Democratic Party website states that “the transition to clean energy has the potential to grow our economy and create millions of new jobs here in America” (democrats.org). The Obama administration supports domestic oil production with increased safety measures, along with wind, solar, and geothermal energy, which have nearly doubled since 2008 with Obama in office. Fuel efficiency in automobiles is also stressed, in order to help families save money and reduce our country’s dependence on foreign sources of oil. Although Republicans and Democrats alike see the importance of strengthening our country’s energy security, each party favors extremely different methods of doing so.

When discussing energy in the news, you may have heard about the Keystone XL Pipeline, another issue that has sparked much debate between Republicans and Democrats. The pipeline is a project that would transport oil from Canada’s Boreal forest to the Gulf of Mexico. The environmental and economic pros and cons are widely disagreed upon. This January, Obama denied an application to begin building the pipeline. He made a public statement, explaining that “the rushed and arbitrary deadline insisted on by Congressional Republicans prevented a full assessment of the pipeline’s impact, especially the health and safety of the American people, as well as our environment” (whitehouse.gov). Republicans, however, believe that building the pipe would create thousands of new jobs for the American people as well as prevent an energy shortage. The Republican Party states, “we are committed to approving the Keystone XL Pipeline and to streamlining permitting for the development of other oil and natural gas pipelines” (gop.com). The outcome of November’s election will dictate much of this issue’s outcome.

This article includes only a fraction of each party’s full energy policy. If you want to know more about any of these issues, each party’s website has loads of information that will help you make a truly educated decision about which candidate you wish to support come November. You can check out the Republican Party’s site at www.gop.com, the Democratic Party’s site at www.democrats.org, and the White House’s own website at www.whitehouse.gov, which will provide you with full statements and information about current US policy. Happy voting!
HOW TO GROW AN AVOCADO TREE
By Nicole J. McElrath

I love to make guacamole with my Grandmother. We experiment with different recipes and really enjoy the finished product. However, avocado—the main ingredient—is not a cheap fruit. My grandma asked me to figure out if we could do something with the leftover pit. I had read online you can actually grow your own avocado tree, so get our money’s worth, I went on a mission to do just that. We were going to plant our own avocado tree!

First, you horizontally align four toothpicks into the top portion of the pit, carefully drilling them in (The top of the pit is the pointer end). The toothpicks should be placed so that about 75% of the remaining pit is underneath them. The toothpicks will be able to hold your pit standing upward in a cup. After your pit is held in the cup all you need to do is add lukewarm water. The water should almost cover the entire pit but leave a little more than an inch dry. You should place your cup near a sunny window inside and make sure to continue adding water when it gets low. I like to do more than one pit at the same time just in case some are not able to grow. The pit will crack at the bottom and a root will grow about one to three months after. There is a little seed in between the cracked pit and it is very important that this seed stays intact, because if anything happens to it you might have to start all over. When the root gets to be about 2 inches long it is time to plant!!

Clay pots are the best for avocado trees. Since my pits were ready around springtime, I moved my tree outside (Avocado trees at least 70°F). I have planted three in the same pot and I like to use organic soil for them. I left about a quarter of the top of my pit still exposed so the tree does not have to go through much trouble in shooting up. After you have a substantial stem go ahead and cover the remaining exposed part with soil. My tree has loved the sun and really flourished around these summer months. You want to keep the soil moist but do not water it excessively. If you know heavy winds are on the way it is best to shelter the tree. Due to the temperature that avocado trees live in, the plant needs to be brought in when it gets cooler out, especially during frosts. It is unlikely that any fruit will sprout but I have really enjoyed growing it because it looks nice and they are unique. I take much pride in my tree because it took patience and a lot of love. I hope to have it for a long time If you follow these steps I am confident you can get your own avocado tree as well.

HAVE FUN
Jersey Apples - Slim Pickings This Fall
by Daniel Pelligra

Now that the fall semester is in full swing, the end of the last semester may seem eons away. But an early warm streak that happened during the late winter and early spring last semester caused premature blooming of many trees, including New Jersey’s apple orchards.

This weather anomaly is currently wreaking havoc on many of the apple crops this fall. The warm streak, which was followed by periods of frost that damaged the blooms, has cut the nation’s overall apple output this year by 14%. This is causing problems on many of the state’s farms. New Jersey is looking to come up about a million pounds short of their total of 35 million last year.

Varieties hit the hardest were the golden delicious, black Arkansas, and Stayman Winesap. Consequently, consumers could not only face difficulties picking their own apples, but may also notice an increase in prices at their local supermarkets on various apple products, such as ciders and pies. Battleview Orchards, located nearby in Freehold Township, has even put a large disclaimer on their website citing the frost in May and a hailstorm in July as the reason for a very limited pick-your-own crop this season. So while you still may be able to get out with your family to do some traditional fall apple picking, make sure to call your local orchard ahead of time to check on the availability of their crop.

Happy Picking!

http://www.battlevieworchards.com/
http://articles.philly.com/2012-09-04/news/33564261_1_apple-growers-apple-production-cider
Between 1997 and 2011, the sale of organic foods have increased from $3.6 billion to $24.4 billion despite the fact that they are close to twice the price of the conventional alternatives. So what is organic? What does it mean? Is it really healthier? Is it more nutritious? What do all the labels mean? Ever since I became a mother I have been asking these questions to feed my son the best, most nutritious and least harmful foods as possible.

Organic foods are supposed to be foods that are grown without the use of pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics, growth hormones, irradiation, industrial solvents, chemical food additives, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). After a set of production standards set forth by United States Department of Agriculture have been met, these foods receive an organic certification and are then allowed to receive the “USDA organic seal.” But what do all of the labels even mean? Here’s a chart to help differentiate the terms (Helpguide.org):

**The controversy:** An article recently released by The Stanford School of Medicine, written by Michelle Brandt, is called “Little evidence of health benefits from organic foods, Stanford study finds”. This article compares organic and non-organic food and how it affects human chemistry. After conducting what they state as “the most comprehensive meta-analysis to date of existing studies comparing organic and conventional foods,” they have stated that organic foods are neither more nutritious or carry fewer health risks than its competitors. Also, that there are no differences of vitamin content, protein, or fat content. Organic foods did however reduce pesticide exposure, 30% lower risk of pesticide contamination and antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

The statement that answered my question was, “Two studies of children consuming organic and conventional diets did find lower levels of pesticide residues in the urine of children on organic diets, though the significance of these findings on child health is unclear.” I would rather not have my son have higher levels of pesticide in his developing body.

So I ask you… Is the little extra money spent worth it??

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>“Minimally processed”; meat cannot have any artificial colors, flavors, or ingredients as well as preservatives. Animals can still be given antibiotics or growth enhancers. Example, can apply to all raw cuts of beef since they are not processed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass Fed</td>
<td>Animals are fed a diet of only grass or hay and have access to the outdoors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Range</td>
<td>Animals are not confined to a cage (access to the outdoors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No hormones added</td>
<td>Animals are raised without the addition of growth hormones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% Organic</td>
<td>Made with 100% organic ingredients (completely organic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>Foods that contain at least 95% organic ingredients (Display USDA seal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made with organic ingredients</td>
<td>Foods that contain at least 70% organic ingredients (Will not display USDA seal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contains organic ingredients</td>
<td>Foods that contain less than 70% organic ingredients (Will not display USDA seal).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bloody Hell! There’s a Frog in my Food!

By Cody Beltis

Many Americans have been following an organic food movement in the past few years, but in the United Kingdom, citizens are finding that their food is coming a little too organic. Recently, frogs have been found hopping about in packages of lettuce and spinach shipped overseas. And some of the frogs, unfortunately, weren’t still so lively. Imagine getting ready to serve a fresh cobb salad to your family and coming across a tree frog swamped in the ranch dressing. Yum! For those of us who enjoy the little critters legs, I suppose it would be a treat.

Several complaints in the U.K. have come in referring to the Tesco, Florette, Sainsbury, and Waitrose supermarket chains as distributors of the frog-bearing greens. Supposed consumers include many horrified mothers, and a vegetarian from London who stabbed a frog and felt sick.

According to Medical Daily, an online news source for worldwide health and medical science reports, another Londoner had become ill from the sighting. Olly Goldenberg, husband of a pregnant wife, claimed that his wife became sick upon finding the frog in her bag of spinach from Tesco groceries. Goldenberg was refunded for the spinach but was angry that Tesco would not give more compensation until further investigation was done. “This is not about the money,” Goldenberg was said to have stated, “there is something wrong here and this is below the standards you would expect.”

There are several accounts of this incident across the globe. The slimy amphibian was discovered in a salad at a Burger King in the Netherlands. Another, dead, was found in a pre-mixed Caesar salad from an Australian supermarket, and one reporting was from a Costco supermarket in California. However, the most complaints have been reported in the U.K.

One supposed answer for the frog invasion is that the water used to wash the greens contained polliwogs. Soon enough, the polliwogs matured in the packaged products and ended up in consumer’s refrigerators.

It is important to remember, however, that some of the discoveries could have been hoaxes. A fair number of the reports were pictures sent via email. One can never be sure about these types of incidents. Remember the hoopla about the woman who “found” a finger in her Wendy’s chili? Surprise, surprise, it was her dead grandmothers. She was in pursuit of suing the wealthy fast food chain and making loads of cash.

Finding a frog in a salad would be a startling experience, but is it really worth it to report or especially to sue over? I know a few of us would consider a live one a free pet. The greens would just need a quick rinse. Nature is still all around us. Frogs will be frogs, even in a world of packaged foods.
A Warning from Earth by Julia Harenberg

According to the NY Times, the melting of the Arctic Sea ice has finally ended for the year, but breaking a record that will have devastating impacts on many future aspects of the Earth.

The Arctic Sea reached a low of sea ice cover of 1.32 million square miles before the sea began to refreeze after the melting period ended, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center. This means that the ice cover was 24 percent of the Arctic Ocean. The last record low was in 2007, where the ice cover was 29 percent of the Arctic Ocean. When satellite tracking first began in the 1970s, the lowest ice cover amount reached in the Arctic Ocean during the melting season was usually about 50 percent. This shows a significant drop in ice cover and a significant increase in ice melt over the past four decades.

In August, the Arctic Sea ice melted at a rate of about 35,400 square miles per day, according to National Geographic. This broke the record for August and was also a rate that was twice as fast as normal.

So what caused this record breaking ice melt? Why is it so different from all the melting seasons before? Scientists believe that the 2007 record was due to conditions that involved a weather pattern known as an anticyclone which entails clear skies that allowed more sunlight to reach the ice and melt it. The ice is continuously thinner than it was in the past, so it melts at a faster rate, said Julienne Stroeve of the NSIDC. Stroeve researched the extent to which global warming is the reason for the melting. Human caused greenhouse gas emissions are responsible for 60% of the shrinkage of sea ice since 1979, and the rest is due to natural climate variability. Scientists now believe that the Arctic Ocean will be free of summer ice as soon as 2020, which is much sooner than the United Nations predicted in 2007.

The increasing of ice melt may not seem like a big deal since it does refreeze after the melting season is over, but there are many potential consequences that we may have to face due to the increase in magnitude. The Arctic acts as an air conditioner for the entire world and it is slowly disappearing. The melting sea ice itself will not cause a direct global sea level rise because the space taken up by melted sea ice is the same as the original ice cover. However, as the ice melts a once white reflective surface becomes a dark ocean surface, causing more of sun’s heat to be trapped into the ocean, which contributes to the melting of the Greenland ice sheet resulting in global sea level rise.

The extra heat in the ocean also goes into the atmosphere as water vapor contributes to warmer temperatures and storm formation. Jennifer Francis, a climate researcher here at Rutgers in the Marine and Coastal Science Department, says that the sea ice reduction can cause raised temperatures in the northern hemisphere and also influence the flow of atmospheric jet streams. The jet streams have already been observed getting larger and moving more slowly, which can prolong fall and winter weather patterns across the entire northern hemisphere. Many extreme weather events such as droughts, cold spells, and heat waves are directly associated with these slow moving weather patterns.

On top of the global sea level rise and the extreme weather conditions that will threaten our hemisphere, Walt Meier, a research scientist at the Snow and Ice Center, says that polar bears may potentially go extinct, and native communities will have to adapt to the changes.

This record breaking sea ice melt is the Earth’s reaction to human input. Science has been stressing the potential consequence of heat-trapping emissions in the atmosphere and they fear that they may have underestimated the severity and speed of the consequences. This ice melt should serve as a red flag to make serious global moves in reducing and limiting emissions. Unfortunately, the NY Times reported that governments have not responded with great urgency and that many are actually planning to exploit newly accessible minerals in the Arctic which includes drilling for more oil.

Everything is interconnected. The Arctic Sea may be far away from us, but the impacts from its melting may be felt all over the world.

This summer I was given the awesome opportunity to live and intern in New York City. I worked at a nonprofit named GRACE Communication Foundation. It is an organization that focuses on the interconnection between food, water, energy, and educating consumers.

When I was first interviewed for the internship, I enthusiastically expressed my interest in the topic of sustainable food and agriculture. Today’s conventional food system relies on the use of synthetic fertilizers, factory farming, a large input of resources, and mass amounts of transportation. This method of agriculture is harmful to the health of the environment and people. GRACE supports sustainable agriculture which focuses on local small-scale farming, an approach that produces wholesome food while using humane methods that are healthier for consumers and less wasteful to the environment. I was very interested in helping to spread awareness of the benefits associated with small-scale farming. Because of my interests, I was assigned to assist in several projects throughout my stay that related to this cause.

My first project involved mapping out an “eatwell guide” for National parks across the country. I had to locate and research grocers, farmers markets, restaurants, and bed & breakfast inns whose practices aligned with our organization’s values of promoting a sustainable approach to agricultural practices. This way, visitors and tourists frequenting the parks can easily find healthy and sustainable local vendors to eat at throughout their travels!

My second project involved helping update the organization’s new recipe page. I was in charge of finding recipes to post on the GRACE website, in order to help those at home who wish to prepare a local organic meal. I had to research cookbooks, food blogs, and restaurants whose recipes focused on using local, sustainable, and organic ingredients. Once I found a recipe that coincided with our organization’s values, I contacted the author or chef and requested access to their delicious recipes so our readers at home would have a source to reference if they wished to practice eating local and needed a place to start!

In addition to the above projects, I have also been given the opportunity to write for the company’s blog. It was harder than I had expected—it required a new style of writing I wasn’t used to, and it could often take two weeks of edits and meetings just to finalize a single post!

The projects I was assigned were just part of the experience. This summer I learned what it meant to work in an environment with other who are fighting for the same cause. It was a wonderful feeling to delve into deep discussions on topics of food policy and culture with fellow interns and coworkers. People in the office bonded over potlucks and caught up around the coffee pot in the morning—drinking our organic fair trade local brew. This summer was an experience of a lifetime—one I have learned a lot from and will cherish forever.

By Arielle Wortzel
Hello from Down Under! Although I've only been here for a few months, studying abroad in Australia has been the time of my life. It didn’t take long to fall in love with the easygoing lifestyle and unique environment. In Brisbane, Queensland, the sun is out nearly every day holding true to its nickname, the sunshine state. Even in winter, it’s possible to get tan. Sun block is a must! The city bustles with life, but it only takes a short trip outbound to be surrounded by nature at the coast or in the forest.

Australia is full of adventure. During my time here so far, I've hiked over 20 kilometers in Lamington National Park, scuba dived with Grey Nurse sharks, and hung out with kangaroos and koalas. Australians profoundly care for and love nature. A large portion of the culture is centered on being in the outdoors. The weather, flora, and fauna are all irresistible to be around.

Recently, I returned from a camping trip to Fraser Island, the largest sand island in the world. In the native language, Fraser Island is named k’Gari, which translates to paradise. The name definitely holds true. Massive eucalyptus trees and other various types of vegetation flourish there on sand instead of soil. Beautiful lakes emerged from forests and sand dunes.

Fraser is a World Heritage Site, which means it is a naturally protected and valued place. I really admired how people cared for nature. The wonderful group of people who guided my trip had so much knowledge of and passion for the environment. It was contagious; I found myself so intrigued and absorbed by the island. Everyone pitched in to pick up any litter and preserve the island. It really goes to show how community effort can make all the difference.

Hiking in the rainforests, swimming in lakes, spotlighting for animals at night, and riding in four-wheel drive cars on the beach were all exhilarating experiences. After five days and four nights, I survived the dingo-populated island and 30 bites by mosquitoes or ‘mozzies,’ as Australians would say. I was sad to leave, however, very grateful for the opportunity to visit such an incredible place.

Next stop, the Great Barrier Reef! Stay tuned!

Cheers!
Global Environmental Brigades: Panama

By: Denise Galianos

Through a social action organization called Global Brigades, I was fortunate enough to have a life changing volunteer experience in Piriati, Panama. I worked with the environmental brigade, whose primary goal was to empower the people of Piriati by reversing environmental degradation and promoting environmental stewardship through reforestation, waste management, and sustainable agriculture programs. These programs and workshops are created to educate the families of Piriati on these urgent issues and to collaboratively find ways to meet their environmental needs.

Piriati is a small, rural community inhabited by an indigenous group called the Embera. The Embera people rely mostly on farming crops to feed their families, and they have few resources available to educate themselves on sustainable methods of agriculture. In order to clear forests and make more room for farming and livestock, the Embera use “slash and burn,” which is a method that consists of cutting and burning trees. In addition to this, waste management is a tremendous issue facing not only the Embera, but all of the people of Panama. There is no proper garbage system implemented in the entire country, so garbage is either burned or buried. Many in the communities are unaware of fundamental concepts like reducing and reusing, or the differences in burying organic versus inorganic material.

On my particular brigade, families had applied to work with Global Brigades to implement better methods of agriculture into their lifestyle. These individuals were struggling because their crops were not growing effectively, causing great hardships for their families. Rutgers students combined with students from Loyola University to help build greenhouses for families in Piriati. About six volunteers were paired to one family, an architect, and a translator. Altogether, there were four greenhouses to build for four different families during the week-long experience. The groups all built the greenhouse from scratch. The land had to be cleared and fertilized, the wood for the greenhouse was individually cut and measured, the structure was hammered together, and fertilizers were made from collected materials of the community.

The group worked from early in the morning through hot afternoon hours. The families that each group was working with would join the volunteers provided valuable assistance throughout the project. In addition to this, an education session was held every day to explain to the families what the volunteers were doing, why they were doing it, and how this impacted the environment. The volunteers answered any questions and worked with the families to establish an understanding of the environmental issues. Seeing the finished product, which was made from such hard work and passion, was a fantastic experience. Even better than this, however, was the strong bond that the volunteers shared with the families.

My family consisted of two parents, an 11 year old daughter, and an 8 year old boy. I have never in my life met such grateful individuals who were so genuinely excited to learn about the world around them. My family was so inquisitive during the education sessions. It was their questions and contributions that made the lessons so valuable and made me fully understand the impact that knowledge can have on people’s lives. In addition to this, the volunteers shared a deep cultural connection and exchange with the families. The families did not have any of the luxuries most people in the United States do, but were still the happiest community. Spending so much time immersed in a different culture, appreciating the beauty of nature, and helping families who need it really made this experience a truly unforgettable one.
3...2...1...INTERNSHIP & HELPFUL HINTS! By Scott Sincoff

Growing up as a self-proclaimed “weather-weenie,” I always dreamed about working at the Weather Channel. Never, in my wildest dreams, did I think it was going to happen as a Rutgers student. I found out I was going to be able to do it during the summer and this opportunity was an incredible experience!

First, it allowed me to network and make contacts in a field that I am extremely passionate about. I did my best to make a good impression by learning at a fast pace and doing what I’m supposed to be doing with great commitment. I became knowledgeable in creating the necessary graphics and turn into a go-to person to assist whenever I was needed, especially in the very early morning hours. Being able to work a flexible schedule is also extremely beneficial because it shows your supervisors that you are willing to do anything to be the best that you can be.

Secondly, be passionate. Meteorology has always been a significant interest of mine and it has become something that truly encompasses who I am. From producing WeatherWatcher forecasts on RU-tv to doing a weather hit on 90.3 The Core’s radio show, “A Proper Gander,” my experiences at Rutgers made my internship so much more worthwhile because I was prepared for it by doing what I love. Do the most in the field that you wish to pursue while still doing your studies because it will prepare you for the real world more than you think.

Getting an internship is so important nowadays because you need experience to get a job, and you need a job to gain experience. It may sound cliché, but how you perform in your internship could make or break you getting a job at that place in the future or being referred for another position elsewhere. Make the best of the opportunity that you get and get the job you love!

Hiking Your Way to Better Health
by Andrew Holloway

Rutgers students may not know it, but there are many nature trails in New Jersey just waiting to be hiked. We may not see untamed nature in our everyday life here in New Brunswick, but take a trip to Livingston campus and you will be surprised to find out that we even have trails right here in our backyard! The Rutgers Ecological Preserve, located off of County Road 701 and Road 3, is a great way to escape from reality and enjoy a relaxing day hiking through the woods with some friends. Not only will you enjoy the natural beauty, but your body and mind will be thanking you as well.

The trails haven’t always been there—over the years the Ecological Preserve has taken many different forms. From the 1840s to the era of the Great Depression, the land was managed for farming and forestry until it was abandoned due to mounting financial pressures. Then during World War II the military built the largest staging area of its time on these grounds, and Camp Kilmer was formed in less than 6 months by 11,000 workers. Remnants of the camp can still be seen today, so go out and explore the trails for yourself.

Along with a healthy diet, hiking can improve muscular fitness, lower your risk of coronary heart disease and high blood pressure, and lead to improved cardio-respiratory fitness (heart and lungs)—all while having fun and enjoying the beauty of the woods. There are many trails in New Jersey to enjoy in the area, so grab some friends and check out the link below! To learn more about other fun outdoor events check out the Rutgers Outdoor Club. The Rutgers Outdoor Club holds events from trail clean-ups to give back to the community, to fun outdoor events like kayaking and camping trips. Upcoming events in October include a backpacking trip in Cheesequake State Park on October 13th and another backpacking trip in the Pine Barrens October 20th. So if you’re looking to get involved at Rutgers and these events sound interesting to you then sign-up up for the RUOC today!

http://www.cwconline.org/about/ab_hist.html
Keeping our Oceans Clean

by Mary Ruffner

Keeping the oceans clean is not an easy task due to the sheer volume of waste that is produced yearly, but it is not an impossible one. There are many organizations that work to help clean up beaches and educate the public about keeping the environment clean. One of these organizations is the Ocean Conservancy, which has over 500,000 volunteers who pick up trash along the beaches throughout different countries. Over the last 40 years the Ocean Conservancy Coastal Clean Up has cleaned over 20,000 miles of beaches and collected over 9 million pounds of garbage. This is a perfect example of how big of an impact people can have when they work together to cleaning the environment. There has been a lot of progress made in the movement toward a cleaner planet but there is still a lot that has to be done.

The Ocean Conservancy not only cleans up miles upon miles of beaches but they also keep track of the type of garbage that is collected. This is important because it allows people to see what the garbage consists of, which can help in finding ways to try to limit that specific waste.

It is so important to have clean beaches not only for our own enjoyment but also for the animals that live there. The garbage that collects on the beach and in the ocean is very harmful to the animals that live there. Many animals get entangled in plastic bags and other debris that are floating in the water. This is something that can be avoided if people do their part in disposing of trash and picking up litter.

Beach cleanups are a great way to help in the fight for cleaner oceans and beaches but that is not the only way that people can help. Keeping your own community clean and litter free is a great start! Litter that is on the streets gets swept into sewage drains when it rains and gets dumped into local rivers, which in turn can make it to the ocean. Keeping local communities clean is a huge step in limiting the ocean pollution. There are many ways that people can get involved with cleaning up the community. Here at Rutgers University, there are many cleanup New Brunswick days. These cleanups involve students and community members going around the streets of New Brunswick picking up trash. There are also Raritan river clean ups that help a lot in the over all problem of pollution in our area and in the overall problem in the oceans. It may not seem like a lot but every bit of garbage that someone picks up is that much less garbage that will end up in the oceans!

Recycle or reuse?! By Selen Altiok

The decision to recycle or reuse products has been a reoccurring struggle of mine for quite a while. Which one is better? Well, better for what? Better for the environment or for individual lifestyles? At points, I feel as if both are correct and that it is a lifestyle everyone should strive for—reusing as much as they can. I thought it would be easy!

Products are bought and the left over containers, plastics and glass can be creatively used for something else. Last year I attempted this lifestyle due to an inspiration from the book No Impact Man by Colin Beavan. I thought this man was incredible and his deeds to his family and his environment were impeccable. He cared for his environment probably as much as he cared for his family—the two coincided in his eyes. In order to have a healthy family, a clean environment is necessary. I was and still am very touched by his story. After finishing this book, I decided to have a little adventure myself and only create food waste. Oh was I in for a rude awakening.

I completely underestimated the total amount of waste I create as just one individual. The first day was not all that bad; I was very careful with buying things I knew I could not reuse and made sure not to pick up non-reusable containers. What I could not comprehend was how to cut out the little things I threw out such as napkins, toilet paper, cotton ear swabs, floss, etc... I definitely did not want to blow my nose into a handkerchief (plus I still do not understand how it can be used multiple times a day). After the second or third day, I realized this challenge was more arduous than I thought. Instead of including the little things, I strictly focused on minimizing waste when it came to buying. I avoided and still avoid plastic bags, paper cups for coffee (even though carrying a travel mug can be tedious), any plastic utensils, and take-out boxes.

One of the habits I have developed is avoiding excessive packaging at the grocery stores. Why does one pepper need to be wrapped several times on a Styrofoam-like plate? That creates so much waste for just one pepper! This is why I enjoy shopping at smaller, organic markets because they have products in bulk and nothing is pre-packaged. I favor bringing my re-usable bags and containers to these small markets because reducing waste is very doable in these places. Instead of going to Shoprite and paying 10 dollars for a flimsy, plastic tub of almonds, I can bring my sturdy container to one of these organic markets and fill it with as many almonds as I want. It’s great! Over the past 2 years or so, I have developed behaviors that aid me in reducing waste since I truly think reusing is the best option for the environment. For individual lifestyles, reusing is certainly troublesome and can be frustrating. Developing awareness while shopping can help reduce waste by becoming aware about packaging, and that can be a starting point for countless individuals.

Recycling, on the other hand, is a much more deceptive means of attempting to reduce waste. Although it seems like a simple process, many people lack the knowledge of what can and cannot be recycled, leading to an epidemic of ‘reckless recyclers’ who just toss everything that seems to be recyclable into the recycle bins and throw everything else in the garbage. From the plastic caps on bottles to the foamy packaging that comes off almost everything from supermarkets, there are many things that shouldn’t end up in the recycling bin, but inevitably do. So, it may be that the best way to help with New Jersey’s waste problem would be to educate more people on reusing and recycling properly. I honestly perceive it to be a more enjoyable and healthy lifestyle; however, like I have mentioned earlier, it does take time and patience to develop such habits. Once it is a regular habit however, it is one step closer to helping our environment stay disconnected from our garbage and waste.
New York City is infamous for having some of the cleanest drinking water in the states, all from the tap. This is in part due to the massive Catskill/Delaware watershed system that delivers around 90% of the massive city’s water supply. But why New York? Of all the places to build a massive watershed system around, why this city? The answer is simple. New York was and remains a massive economic and cultural hub. It’s importance was visible even back when the plan to build the system was first devised, because finding ways to get water to the city was becoming increasingly difficult as the population grew.

In 1905, the City of New York’s government signed an act that allowed them to burrow into the region and build dams, aqueducts, and reservoirs in order to get much needed water into the city. Construction on the reservoirs began in 1907 and officially ended with the creation of the Cannonsville reservoir in 1965. The watershed system is massive, consisting of both the Catskill/Delaware watershed system and the Croton system, funneling 1.4 billion gallons of water into the city a day. Not sure what a watershed is? It functions like a funnel, filtering water in from various lands into large bodies of water, and the natural action of gravity pushes the water from reservoirs to the aqueducts and then through lower elevation until it reaches the city. It should be noted that this water is unfiltered, unlike most municipal water systems, which must be pumped full of various cleansers to help free the water of impurities. New York’s is unfiltered because the watershed system does such a good job of siphoning out the bad stuff through its aqueduct system.

But this process did not come without sacrifices. Building the reservoirs led to a number of conflicts, as some states like Pennsylvania and New Jersey fought to keep their lands from NYC’s Board of Water Supply. In order to begin flooding the various lakes, entire towns and people had to be uprooted and moved elsewhere; some were simply just asked to leave. Towns were flooded, remaining under the reservoirs as haunting reminders of the sacrifices made to historically assure New York would remain a strong city of currently 8 million people. Over 2,200 people left their towns, businesses, and homes behind. The towns of Lackawack, Eureka, and Montela all lay at the bottom of the Roundout reservoir, their tanneries and hotels all abandoned. It’s unimportant to many, but after visiting the Time and Valleys Museum in Grahamsville, New York, it was sobering to see how the history of the region changed and thrived and ultimately fell under miles of water.

It’s a great feat for New York City to have a majority of their drinking water unfiltered; it’s healthier and it’s far more natural. The City and its Department of Water Supply made what some would call ‘necessary sacrifices’ to assure this. It is a vital city, and needed the best of the best when it came to water supply. The watershed system is still expanding to this day, and continues to be under the greatest of protection by the DEP. The DEP assures that little human recreational activity occurs by the watershed, keeping it a pristine community of both man-made lakes and carefully (naturally) built ecosystems. Hopefully this mutual protection of resources will continue for years to come, as this massive system grows and the histories of it remain somewhat murky and forgotten.

Some helpful links:

http://www.pwconserve.org/issues/watersheds/newyorkcity/index.html
Waste Not, Want Not:
A Growing Problem of Food Waste in the US  By Rebecca Noah

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), food waste is the single largest component of municipal solid waste that is arriving in landfills and incinerators in the U.S.

A recent study completed by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) found that 40 percent of food goes uneaten and into a landfill in the U.S. today. Converting that percentage into dollars means Americans are throwing out an equivalent of 165 billion dollars worth of food a year. Meanwhile, as almost half of food purchased is thrown away, one in six Americans lack food security.

To add to the waste, food production requires many valuable and precious resources. Food production from farm to fork uses up 50 percent of U.S. land and 80 percent of all freshwater consumed.

In addition, food sitting and rotting in a landfill accounts for 25 percent of U.S. methane emissions, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.

However, amidst the gloomy statistics about the alarming amount of food Americans waste, experts are trying to begin a food waste reduction movement institutionally and individually in American homes.

Dana Gunders, author of "Wasted: How America is Losing up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill,” cites ways we can curb our food waste. Beginning in the government, the United Kingdom has implemented a national food waste reduction program aimed at reducing food waste to 50 percent by 2020. Five years later, the program has already reduced food waste by 18 percent. In contrast, the United States government has yet to address this growing problem.

A big issue in food waste reduction is the miscommunication of food labels, which are largely unregulated. Contrary to the common belief 'use by' and 'best by' dates found on both perishable and non-perishable products do not indicate food safety, they are actually manufacturer suggestions for peak quality of the product. Which means, many Americans are discarding perfectly edible food. Clarifying and creating a regulated standard for these food labels can have a significant impact on reducing food loss.

However, food reduction programs will likely begin and have a large impact locally within state and local government's and individual homes. Local governments can initiate a reduction plan by developing and instituting municipal composting programs, making it much more convenient for every household to compost. American households can reduce food waste through educational programs that better inform consumers about food perishing and how to reduce waste through more efficiently planning, storing, and prepping food.

Another option to combating food loss is the development of a side-by-side initiative that focuses on both food waste reduction and reusing food waste. One option is to capture the methane produce by the food waste through anaerobic digestion. Anaerobic digestion occurs naturally in the absence of oxygen. Bacteria break down organic materials and produce gases, such as methane. Methane can then be captured in the facility and used as an energy source. Food waste is highly biodegradable which means the methane energy source could be continually generated.

By addressing the issues that contribute to food waste, we can hopefully begin to develop comprehensive food loss reduction programs that can result in less edible food in the garbage, less resources will be wasted, and more Americans will be fed.

You can learn more about food waste and how to prevent it by reading “Wasted: How America is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill” written by Dana Gunders and issued by the NRDC, which can be found at: http://www.nrdc.org/food/files/wasted-food-IP.pdf
Eco News

WORLD NAKED BIKE RIDES  By: Kimber Ray

Definitions of freedom may wildly oscillate through rhetoric and law, but on August 25th, 2012, over 2,500 riders agreed on one thing—there was nothing quite like the freedom of biking naked through Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love. One rider cheekily indicated that he was a low emission fuel source. Another rider, colored head to toe in fiery paint, wore the slogan “Silence is not consent.” With its mishmash of objectives, the Philly Naked Bike Ride may draw some criticisms reminiscent of those against the Occupy Wall Street movement, but its mission is one we all esteem: healthier communities. That’s why I joined the mass of riders this summer as we celebrated a vision of a cleaner, safer, and healthier world.

The Naked Bike Ride campaigns are not only a highly effective way of drawing attention to messages of bicycle lane promotion and body image acceptance, but are also simply an amazing experience! Riding through the stream of bikers, there’s a medley of colors and creative body paint, while other riders are adorned in flowers or homemade costumes. Wacky twists on bicycles also spun through the crowd, from the familiar ‘banana bikes’ to eclectic bikes styled in the tastes of the 1800s, and even bikes bedecked with solar powered strings of electric lights. Accompanying this lively spectacle of festive riders is the sound of horns and boom boxes and, of course, a contagious enthusiasm among both the riders and the amassed crowds.

Good-natured cheering from the crowds of pedestrians followed throughout the ride, along with the occasional inquisitive “Why are they naked?” Passing several weddings and even more tour buses, we welcomed the visitors to Philadelphia and congratulated the smiling newlyweds, who will no doubt have quite an interesting recollection of their wedding day.

New problems require new approaches, and many people become cynical and discouraged in light of the staggering social and environmental challenges we face. The Naked Bike Ride campaigns are at the forefront of suggesting that fun communal events and social advocacy can be paired to create a powerful platform for changing the public and environmental health landscape. The movement, therefore, isn’t focused on creating immediate changes in the ways people act, so much as driving a long-term change in the way people think. As we ourselves are the source of many of the problems we face, we must learn to transform the way we think about ourselves and our communities.

If you’d like to participate in the Naked Bike Rides next summer, check www.worldnakedbikeride.org to find a ride in your nearest city. And don’t worry if you’re more modest—the bike rides are a ‘bare as you dare’ event, and many people opt to wear bathing suits or body paint. So get out and start empowering individuals to stand up for the environment, stand up for themselves, and stand on their bike naked!

Philly Naked Bike Ride passing City Hall.
Image credit: <http://underdesign.wordpress.com/2012/08/25/philly-naked-bike-ride-2012/>
Article reference: www.phillynakedbikeride.org
Eco News

The Second Coming of the Electric Car? By Tami Segal

As gas prices continue their upward ascent, fuel efficiency has overtaken all other aspects as a top priority for car buyers. And of course, hybrids have taken center stage, with Toyota’s Prius achieving wild popularity. According to Time Magazine, “Drivers around the globe purchased nearly a quarter million Toyota Priuses in the first quarter of 2012,” making it the third best selling car. But with the expansion of the Prius family—now including Prius C, Prius V, and the Prius PlugIn—it’s no wonder how Toyota’s brands are in the forefront.

The Prius C is a smaller, compact hybrid, while the Prius V offers more cargo room. But it’s the Prius Plug-In that’s been making headlines. With an estimated 95 mpg in EV mode and 50 mpg in hybrid mode the car industry may be looking at a revolution. But Toyota is not the only car company out there offering plug-in hybrids. Nissan, General Motors, Ford, Mitsubishi, Honda, Tesla, Smart, and Fisker Karma have already become the United States’ EV market leaders. Thankfully, the United States auto industry has finally begun moving forward with these electric cars. Many have become available now, with many that are even affordably priced! So is this the resurgence in electric cars that we’ve been waiting for?

In comparison to Europe, the United States will still have fewer electric cars by 2025. President Barack Obama announced on Tuesday, August 28 new standards that would require automakers to create more energy efficient cars with 54.5 mpg for the 2025 model year. This new policy alongside the Café (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) program will put pressure on car companies to build and market higher efficiency cars. The program currently rules a mandate average of about 29 miles per gallon, with gradual increases to 35.5 mpg by 2016. The Obama Administration plans to continue the policy until the 2025 goal is met, and expects to save 12 billion barrels of oil throughout the duration of the program. This will not only cut CO2 emissions, but will wean the United States’ dependency on foreign oil.

The technology for electric vehicles has existed for at least 14 years now. Pressure on the automakers from the oil industry and lack of force from the government has made such policies fail before. And when California first came out with the Café program, automakers sued. The question is, are these electric cars here to stay? With the government in a better position to control automaker’s financial investments, car companies need to comply with the new energy efficiency policies. And hopefully we will see great things to come.


Hey don't throw out those brown bananas! By Renee Leventon

Have you ever bought a bundle of bananas and they start browning before you are able to finish them? Well, overly ripe bananas are perfect ingredients to baking the most delicious banana bread! The moist cake like bread is an easy creation, and ensures that no banana will go to waste when they lose their yellow coloring. This treat would not have been possible if it was not for Alexander the Great and his army discovering bananas in India during the fourth century BC. Alexander and his army loved the taste of bananas so much that they organized a transportation trade system for the bananas to be exported to the Greeks.

The popularization of the new found fruit grew and banana fritters, banana boats, and banana dishes became common among the Greeks. Around the 1830’s, bananas made their way into the New York and Boston markets. When refrigeration systems were invented people really started buying bananas, and housewives used bananas in snacks, meals, and desserts. Then, in the 1900’s banana recipes were published, the most famous one being banana bread. Its first appearance was in the 1933 Pillsbury cookbook, Balanced Recipes.

Today, banana bread is good for all meals and occasions. It makes for the perfect gift to show someone that they are appreciated, or to fill your stomach with joy.

**BANANA BREAD RECIPE**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 bananas
- ½ cup milk
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1¼ cup sugar
- 2 cups of nuts or blueberries (if desired)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

**INSTRUCTIONS:** *Preheat oven to 350 degrees*

1. Grease and flour dust a 9” x 5” bread pan.
2. In a medium size bowl, mash bananas well with a potato masher.
3. Add remaining ingredients to the mashed bananas, and mix until well blended.
4. Pour mixture into pan.
5. Bake for an hour, or until golden brown
6. Serve with butter, cream cheese, or eat plain.
If you’ve followed current events in the past eighteen months or so, I’m certain you are aware that the nation of Greece is not in especially favorable economic times. In fact, the country has been at the center of a European financial crisis that, to this day, is not nearly resolved. Broadcasts of violent riots in Athens and nation-wide protests have presented Greece as a seemingly tumultuous place, and in many ways these pictures and videos accurately depict the frustration and anger of the population. However, after spending my spring semester abroad in the city of Thessaloniki, I came to find that despite the financial hardships of disastrous unemployment rates, debilitating austerity measures, and what some could call a severe disillusionment with the government, the majority of Greeks still love their country far too much to ever leave.

“How can that be?” you may ask. Well, I think the answer really comes down to the lifestyle they choose to live. For instance, it isn’t uncommon to find businesses closing shop for up to three hours in the middle of the day so that employees can go home and enjoy some time with their families before the evening shift. Actually, many shops didn’t even open back up for the rest of the day. Was that a bit of a nuisance on those afternoons where I was craving a gyro but my favorite street vendor was closed? Sure, but I came to realize the notion of increased family time was a little bit more important than my hunger. Furthermore, Greek “family dinners” at the local taverna were experiences like no other. Three hours of laughing, eating, chit-chatting, and the like would swiftly go by on a regular basis in accordance with these meals.

In the States, these moments are saved for very rare occasions like holidays due to the fact that many of us, myself included, live by that mantra of “time is money”. Now I’m sure what you’re thinking is, “no wonder Greece is in such a mess”, and maybe their relaxed (or what skeptics deem lazy) culture plays some role. What I witnessed was a culture that lived their day-to-day lives with priorities that began with family and celebration of life, not salary and profitability. My journeys through Europe brought me to Spain, Italy, Turkey, and the Netherlands, and in each of these countries I observed a variety of cultures with many lessons to be learned. I’m not suggesting that Americans dramatically alter their workday or mimic the leisure of Southern Europe, but I do think there’s a better balance to be had between work and home, money and family. Studying abroad gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in a culture that was vastly different (and subjectively better) than our own, and I hope that all have the chance to travel the world sometime in their lives. Until then, you can grab a seat on our own Jersey Shore sands and take some time to relax with our loved ones. Oh, and don’t forget to bring the ouzo! Πιά Μας!
Eco News

A Step in the Right Direction  By Will Shinn

Luxury and eco-friendly are two ideas that no longer coincide. The problem seems to lie in the public’s perception of the two. While luxury symbolizes comfort and refinement, eco-friendly carries the ugly thought of sacrifice and change. Our way of life often creates a paradox when the two are combined. We need to change, but can’t because we are comfortable. One of our biggest offenses—which has been debated since the early 1900’s—is the pollution created by passenger vehicles, and the effects it has on human and environmental health. In the past few years a company called Tesla Motors has been working to merge the conflicting ideas of luxury and eco-friendliness by engineering an electric car that will readily fit all of our wants and needs.

Their goal has been to produce a highly refined, eco-friendly passenger vehicle that is acceptable by our current standards. So far they’ve managed to pump out a 350 horse power luxury sedan that rivals anything on the market, the Model S. With a 17” touch screen and leather interior, they didn’t skip on comfort, and the car’s range of 300 miles should make most of the trips for which we use our cars. The only worries to the owner would be recharging, and changing the battery after about 5-6 years. There is no fueling up, which means a much cheaper ride, as well as cleaner air because there is no combustion involved.

Assuming the average driver of a regular gas model car travels a conservative 5,000 miles per year, and the price of gas sits around $3.50 a gallon, they have to account for $17,500 in annual fuel costs alone. That number can grow increasingly scary for those who tend to commute a little farther to work. Besides the costs individuals incur, consuming that much gas means you are producing around 12.7 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, and the environment has to pay for that. With the quantity of people driving in the US alone, that number adds up quickly. Unfortunately, even without emissions, recharging your Model S will still contribute to that number depending on where the energy comes from.

Admittedly, the car isn’t a permanent solution, but it still seems like a step in the right direction. It is nice to think that new technology of this sort is being invested in, and that it could easily start a trend in coming years. The hope would be for more people to become aware of what the true costs of everyday travel are, and to try to offset them—whether it be through hybrid or electric cars. Getting over our dependence on gasoline could easily set us in motion for a more sustainable future.

• http://inventors.about.com/od/estartinventions/a/Electric-Vehicles.htm
• http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/calculator.html#results
• http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tesla_Model_S
Fun things to do during the Fall! By Katie Fudacz

Happy Fall and welcome back to Rutgers! As the semester progresses and the workload piles up, take a day to explore one of the fun fall festivities listed below!

Headless Horseman Hayride –
778 Broadway, Route 9W
Ulster Park, NY 12487

The attraction includes a one mile hayride, a labyrinth style corn maze, six professionally created haunted houses, food concessions, as well as a ghoulish gift shop.
Source - http://www.headlesshorseman.com/

Eastern State Penitentiary
22nd & Fairmount Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Eastern State Penitentiary was once the most famous and expensive prison in the world, but stands today in ruin, a haunting world of crumbling cellblocks and empty guard towers. Schedule to take a haunted tour of the Penitentiary!
Source - http://www.easternstate.org/home

Apple Orchards, Pumpkin Farms, Farmers markets –
Giamarese Farm – 155 Fresh Pond Road, East Brunswick (732) 821-9494
Hauser Hill Farms – 261 Ticetown Toad, Old Bridge (732) 591-1966
John Himich Farms – 701 Cranbury Road, East Brunswick (732) 257-1538
Pleasant Hill Farm – 192 Ridge Road, Rt. 22, Jamesburg (732) 329-0776
Stults Farm – 62 John White Road, Cranbury (609) 799-2523
Battleview Orchards - 91Wemrock Road, Freehold (732) 462-0756
Delicious Orchards – 320 New Jersey 34, Colts Neck (732) 462-1989
Sun High Orchards – 19 Canfield Avenue Randolph (973) 584-4734
Terhune Orchards – 330 Cold Soil Road, Princeton (609) 924-2310
Comments, questions, or concerns? Email us at EPIBtrial@gmail.com We’d LOVE to hear from you!

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**TRAIL MIX**

**Be Green for Halloween!**

Instead of spending big bucks for a Halloween costume this year, be creative and throw together something fun yourself! Try checking out some local thrift stores, like Goodwill and Salvation Army, to find some cool clothes you can use to make a costume. One idea is a retro ‘80s outfit!

**Dr. Clark’s Strange Tales**

- Francesco Piserchia, 36, filed a $17 million lawsuit in August against Bergen County, N.J., police, and individual officers, for being shot following a wild, high-speed car chase through residential neighborhoods in 2010. Although Piserchia and an associate had nearly hit a squad car and were fleeing on foot after their car crashed, they claim the police had no reason to shoot at them because, just moments before the shots, the men had decided to surrender.

- Ihor Stetkewycz appeared in court in Warren, Mich., in June to answer for an indecent exposure incident, brought on, he told the judge, because his pants, purchased by his mother, were "10 sizes" too large. According to police sources, Stetkewycz had also recently dumped large sections of a tree in the middle of a Detroit street; had protection orders against him from two Warren neighbors; was late to the hearing in June because he raced down Interstate 94 chasing his allegedly stolen car that he had spotted on the way to court; and told a female TV reporter inquiring about the tree stumps, "I don’t take no orders from no woman, by the way." He did promise to go clean up the tree parts: "I’m Mr. Clean Up."

- Dakoda Garren, 19, was arrested in Vancouver, Wash., in September on suspicion of stealing an antique coin collection in May that was estimated to be worth $100,000. Garren and his girlfriend were identified after spending some of the coins at a movie theater and a pizza restaurant, using rare Liberty Head quarters (worth from $5 to $18,500) at their face value.