

EnviroNews

Newsletter of the Santa Clara University Environmental Studies Institute

Volume XII

Spring 2001

Winona LaDuke at SCU

Winona LaDuke, 1982 graduate of Harvard, currently lives on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota and works on restoring the local land base and culture. LaDuke serves as the board co-chair for the Indigenous Women's Network and works in a national capacity as Program Director for Honor the Earth Fund, providing vision and leadership for the organization's Regranting Program and its Strategic Initiatives. She was also the Green Party Vice President candidate for last year's Presidential election. In 1994, she was named by Time Magazine as one of America's 50 most promising leaders under 40 years of age. She is author of several books including *Last Standing Woman* (1997) and *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (1999).

On Tuesday, May 8th she will speak in Cal Fresh (in Benson Center). ENVS Colloquium credit will be given. The time is TBA.

ESI Summer Class: Introduction to Environmental Sciences

Shana Weber, soon to be Ph.D. will teach ENVS 1 - Introduction to Environmental Science during SCU Summer Session II this summer. Participants will learn about a variety of scientific research methods used in studying today's environmental challenges.

The class will meet M, T, and Th at 10:20am - 12:30pm. The SCU Summer Course Catalog has the registration details. We hope to see you there!!

ESI Radio Show
Mondays 4-5pm
KSCU 103.3 FM

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Research Opportunity

In cooperation with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), Santa Clara University now has a weather processing computer workstation capable of receiving near real-time data from NOAA weather satellites. We are currently seeking one or more students with an interest in learning how to use this workstation, develop tutorials to assist in teaching its operation to other students, and conduct research projects with the data. Many options are available for receiving academic credit for this work. For more information, contact Prof. Kitts (Mechanical Engineering @ x4382, or ckitts@me.scu.edu) or Prof. Shachter (ESI @ x7086, or ashachter@scu.edu).

Ulistac Update

Well folks, with your help thousands of plants and trees have been planted, watered and mulched. Why not celebrate our efforts? Ulistac Natural Area will be holding its grand opening festivities **on Saturday May 12, 2001 at 10am**. Activities include guided tours through the park and tables full of environmental conservation information.

Although this will be the grand opening for UNA, there is always more work to do. To prepare for the opening, two weeding and planting days are scheduled in April - **Sunday the 22nd and Saturday the 28th, 10am-2pm**. Check the ESI website for UNA updates, or stop by DS 204 for more information about volunteering.



ENVS Colloquium

Who: Winona LaDuke

When: Tuesday May 8th, 2001 (time TBA)

Where: Cal Fresh in Benson

Why: Winona LaDuke was the Green Party VP candidate and now lives on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. She works on restoring the local land base and culture.

New ESI Co-Director Shares His Views

by Professor Peter Minowitz, Political Science Department

I am honored to be working with Professor Amy Shachter during the 2000-2001 academic year as ESI co-director. Professor Shachter has had everything proceeding smoothly as the ESI director, and has been more than gracious in tolerating my interference; I'm continually amazed at how hard and efficiently she's been running things.

Dr. Shachter and I have been involved with the program since its inception. The attempt to create an ES minor at SCU actually began during an informal Faculty Club lunch I had with biologist Dr. Janice Edgerly-Rooks around ten years ago. Professor E-R ended up serving as director of the program during its early years.

In 1997 and 1998, I had the opportunity to teach the ES Capstone with Professor Gail Kirby, a Lecturer in the Marketing Department. We created a seminar on "Popularization, Reform, and Backlash." The class explored the backlash against environmentalism primarily through a critical reading of *The Green Crusade*, by Charles Rubin, which faults landmark environmental thinkers for distorting scientific evidence and for building on premises that are utopian and/or totalitarian. With these criticisms in mind, we scrutinized Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance* (along with various *State of the World* articles). We concluded by examining economic perspectives, e.g., free-market environmentalism, that have contributed to this "backlash" and have themselves been faulted as utopian.

Our discussions of Gore's book left us wondering why, given his grave view of the environmental crisis, the Clinton administration wasn't pushing a strongly green agenda. As the resident political scientist, I emphasized that Vice-Presidents are vastly weaker than Presidents. But I often found myself wondering how different things would be if Gore had been the President. For example, would President Gore have put his political capital on the line to "accomplish the strategic goal of completely eliminating the internal combustion engine over, say, a twenty-five year period" (1993 ed., p. 326)?

My impression from the Gore-Bush debates was that Gore communicated strong concern for global warming and strong opposition to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. On whole, however, the Gore campaign did not present him as an ardent environmentalist. If the ballots in Palm Beach County had been differently designed, we might now be learning how "green" Al Gore would have been as the 43rd President of the United States.

Earth Day- History and Present

by Cathy Harkness

"UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not" -Dr. Seuss' The Lorax

It was thirty one years ago that Gaylord Nelson, the United States senator from Wisconsin, first saw his idea of Earth Day become a reality. In recalling his motivation for proposing this first nationwide environmental protest, Nelson stated: "The objective was to organize a national demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda. It was a gamble, but it worked." On the first Earth Day - April 22, 1970 - 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate on behalf of the environment with the hope of ensuring it a healthy future. The coast-to-coast rallies and demonstrations unified Americans as rich and poor, city dwellers and farmers, and republicans and democrats became adamant supporters of the future health of the environment. In 1990 the Earth Day movement went global as 141 nations also took place in Earth Day festivities.

Here on campus we have been working since beginning of the year to create possibly the most exciting Earth Week celebration this campus has ever seen. The week of April 16th to April 22nd will feature fun activities throughout campus that everyone is invited to partake in. Monday and Tuesday: watch for tables in Benson handing out free GREEN-Zines and selling custom designed t-shirts and Nalgene water bottles. WEDNESDAY is our HUGE Earth Day festival outside in Santa Clara Mall. Some of the activities will include raffling off fleece sweaters, tie-dying, paper making, making hemp crafts, serving free vegetarian food, giving free bike tune-ups, and providing tons of information on how you can become green at SCU. Thursday there will be a speaker and a free vegetarian BBQ in the Owl's Clover Community Garden. During the weekend we will be Celebrating Earth Day at a habitat restoration in Marin County with a retreat at the Beach. For more information, or if you would like to participate in the retreat or habitat restoration please contact Cathy Harkness at scu_green@hotmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you during Earth Week!

Biosphere: Under the Ice

by Shana Weber

During long Northern winters, beavers disappear from the landscape, but they are not hibernating. There is a flurry of activity hidden below the ice, and in the safety of the beaver lodge. The lodge is the center of their communal life and plays a vital role in their winter survival. The beaver lodge is the most massive communal nest constructed by any animal, other than humans.

The scientist Peter Marchand published a description of his experience crawling into a recently abandoned beaver lodge. From the outside, beaver lodges resemble an unkempt pile of mud and sticks, with very few hints of the hidden comforts. Inside, the earthen floor is clean and polished smooth, the walls trimmed neatly with nothing protruding to cause discomfort for a resting animal. A small chamber branching off from one of the two entrance tunnels apparently serves as a feeding platform, just above the water. Marchand, while crouched in the main chamber, was impressed by the lack of odor, and complete absence of food scraps or fecal material.

Beaver lodges are also warm. The unfrozen water below the lodge maintains temperatures near freezing, which is often substantially warmer than the outside air. With the added contribution of heat from the occupants, lodges can reach temperatures of up to sixty degrees in zero-degree weather.

The warm lodge is a necessity, not a luxury. Each time beavers leave the lodge to feed in the icy waters, they lose heat. They can last about thirty minutes before they become hypothermic. They need the lodge to be warm when they get back. One approach may be to stagger their foraging. Beavers internal clocks drift out of phase with the day/night cycle in the winter. Instead of 24-hour internal rhythms, they develop 26 to 29-hour cycles. These offset rhythms may help them in staggering their feeding forays so that the lodge is always occupied and warm for their return.

Reference: Marchand, P.J. 2001. "Warm Welcome: A beaver's lodge is its castle, particularly when ice covers the pond." *Natural History*, March.

Prof. Nancy Unger: History of Eco-Feminism

Ever wonder what professors do on weekends? Lately Prof. Nancy Unger (History, ENVIS, and Women and Gender Studies) spends her weekends traveling the West Coast speaking to audiences about women and the environment.

One of her recent excursions was to Gonzaga University, WA. Her talk highlighted the Native American women's relationship with the environment, as well as the Progressive Era women's campaign to protect endangered birds.

For the pre-colonial Native Americans, population control remained at the heart of their minimal environmental impact. With population density consciously controlled, their survival was secured. Efforts were specifically designed to reduce fertility, such as prolonged breast feeding and sexual abstinence. Post-fertilization measures like abortion and infanticide were practiced as well. Unger explained that these Native American behaviors allowed them to "live rich by wanting little."

Other actions in environmental preservation were also found in farming customs. Unger concedes that Native Americans did indeed manipulate and exploit the land. However, they did not leave soil exposed after exhaustion in a local area. Instead, Indian nations migrated through the environment with ease and minimal labor.

By the early 1900s, Caucasian women were becoming increasingly aware of and active in environmental issues. Many felt that profit had replaced morality and resource conservation. While others chalked up their endeavor to maternalism, women were pushing legislation for endangered birds and boycotts of feather hats.

Unger suggested that the approach taken was cautiously focused on education rather than criticism. Natural resources were for human use as opposed to human abuse. With the massive reduction in many birds- a natural pest control- crop insects were more difficult to eliminate, and chemical pesticides were on the rise.

Early eco-feminist Rachel Carson was one of the first to write on the dangers of pesticides. In *Silent Springs*, she warned of the short and long- term repercussions of DDT on humans. Ezra Taft Benson, Pres. Eisenhower's agriculture secretary at the time of its publication, disregarded her cautions. He did so because he felt it was suspicious that a woman in such an unnatural state (she was a spinster) would care about genetics; he concluded, "she must be a communist."

Lack of credibility caused by the absence of two X-chromosomes did not slow the passion of early eco-feminists. By 1910, there were hundreds of women's clubs, 250 of which were specifically for the protection of plants and birds. Their efforts lit the fire that began destroying anthropocentric myths.

To learn more about eco-feminists in history, email Prof. Unger at nunger@scu.edu.

*article based of "Visiting Professor talks eco-feminist" by Brigit Ciccarello from *The Gonzaga Bulletin**

Why do we care about saving power??

by Chris Watt- Facilities: Building Maintenance and Utilities

Everyone is aware of the need to save power. This need had reached a feverish pitch this last year with daily coverage by the media. Shortages in power generation and transmission have created this new awareness to conserve at the state and local level. SCU is participating in this effort to help California get through the crisis. Power availability is the latest of many reasons for us to conserve. Concern for the environment and of course cost have been the focus of conservation efforts at SCU for years.

Taking an active part in conserving to better the environment is everyone's responsibility and the impacts of conservation efforts are direct and easy to understand. Natural gas fired generation plants produce the majority of power that is used in the western states. These facilities emit huge amounts of air born pollutants into the environment and burn non-renewable resources to produce the power that we consume. Reducing the amount of electricity that we use has a direct and positive impact on the environment by lowering the production demand on these generation facilities.

The rising cost of electricity is another area of concern. The current SCU annual utility bill is roughly 2.4 % of the overall University's budget and rising. As members of the SCU Community, it is our responsibility to help control this cost and conserve wherever possible. Relying on the Facilities Department for efficiency and conservation efforts is not realistic. Decisions on power usage by departments and individuals must be made responsibly and with the knowledge that even slight increases in use can raise the cost to the University and strain the already overloaded local power distribution system. With everybody's help, we can keep costs down and the environment clean.

ENVS Calendar of Events

April

- 16th-20th Earth Week
- 18th Earth Week Festival in the Alameda Square, 11am-3:30pm
- 22nd Earth Day 2001
- 22nd Ulistac Planting 10am-2pm

May

- 7th-11th Africa Week
- 8th Winona LaDuke- time pm in Cal Fresh (Benson)
- 9th Dr. Jay Levy, "The Global Threat of HIV/AIDS: How can Science Face the Challenge?" 7pm, Recital Hall
- 12th Ulistac Natural Area Grand Opening, 10am
- 24th Abstracts for symposium due

June

- 7th Environmental Studies Undergraduate Symposium in the A&S Foyer , 4pm - 6pm
- 16th, 8:30 am: Class of 2001 GRADUATION!!

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