

october 2011  
volume 2 • issue 1



the  
**GREEN  
OBSERVER**

[greenobservermagazine.com](http://greenobservermagazine.com)

## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

THE TURBINE THAT NEVER WAS  
BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN  
PRAIRIE BURNING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
STUDENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS  
GIY: GREEN IT YOURSELF  
GETTING INVOLVED ON CAMPUS  
& MUCH MORE!

**read green • live green**

# the green observer

## YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICATION ON CAMPUS

### table of contents

• RISE & FALL OF THE TURBINE.....	4
• PRAIRIE BURNING.....	6
• COAL TO CLEAN ENERGY TOUR.....	7
• BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN.....	7
• STUDENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN.....	8
• GET INVOLVED.....	9
• SEASONAL RECIPE: PUMPKIN SEEDS.....	10
• CLIMATE REFUGEES SCREENING.....	10
• BEYOND COAL CAMPAIGN.....	11
• GIY: GREEN IT YOURSELF.....	12
• PLIGHT OF THE LOCAL BREWER.....	13
• OPINIONS.....	14

### THE GREEN OBSERVER CREW

Emily Cross  
editor-in-chief, layout

Cait Gallagher  
webmaster

Suhail Barot  
treasurer

Ashley Sandal  
public relation officer

Haley Davis  
managing editor

Miriam Zarate  
managing editor

FUNDED BY SORF

THE GREEN OBSERVER  
IS A PROGRAM OF THE  
UNIVERSITY YMCA



## upcoming events

### OCTOBER 17 - NOVEMBER 18

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
• International Day for the Eradication of Poverty <span style="float: right;">17</span>		• 6:30pm SECs (YMCA) <span style="float: right;">18</span> • 7:30pm Climate Refugees (YMCA) <span style="float: right;">19</span>	• 2pm National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology Webinars • Student Farm stand on the quad <span style="float: right;">20</span>	• SSC Request for Proposals due • Midwest Power Shift Conference October 21st to 23rd in Cleveland, OH <span style="float: right;">21</span>
	• 12pm: Illinois Sustainable Technology Seminar <span style="float: right;">24</span> • 5pm Food Day (YMCA) (Free food!) <span style="float: right;">25</span>	• 6:30pm SECs (YMCA) <span style="float: right;">26</span> • Campus Sustainability Day <span style="float: right;">27</span>	• Student Farm stand on the quad <span style="float: right;">28</span>	• 9am-4pm: Governor Quinn's GGCC Sustainable Universities and Colleges Symposium (Normal, IL) <span style="float: right;">28</span>
• 7:30am-9pm: Biomass Conversion Symposium at iHotel <span style="float: right;">31</span>	NOVEMBER 1 • Sustainability Week 2011	• Sustainability Week 2011 • 12pm: Illinois Sustainable Technology Seminar • 6:30pm SECs (YMCA) <span style="float: right;">2</span>	• Sustainability Week 2011 • Student Farm stand on the quad <span style="float: right;">3</span>	• Engineers Without Borders Regional Conference 2011 <span style="float: right;">4</span>
• 12pm: Illinois Sustainable Technology Seminar <span style="float: right;">7</span>		• 6:30pm SECs (YMCA) <span style="float: right;">8</span>	• Student Farm stand on the quad <span style="float: right;">10</span>	Veteran's Day <span style="float: right;">11</span>
• 12pm: Illinois Sustainable Technology Seminar <span style="float: right;">14</span>	• 12pm: Illinois Sustainable Technology Seminar <span style="float: right;">15</span> • 7pm: Story of Stuff public lecture by Annie Leonard at Illini Union room A, B & C <span style="float: right;">16</span>	• 6:30pm SECs (YMCA) <span style="float: right;">17</span>	• 2pm National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology Webinars <span style="float: right;">18</span>	

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT [GREENOBSEVERMAGAZINE.COM](http://GREENOBSEVERMAGAZINE.COM)

# the rise and fall of the turbine

by Thomas Phelps

I can remember driving through Macomb as a kid and watching the bland landscape roll past my window like a boring movie. Now more than a decade later, wind turbines dot the terrain like white giants guarding the entrance to a new chapter in U.S. energy production.

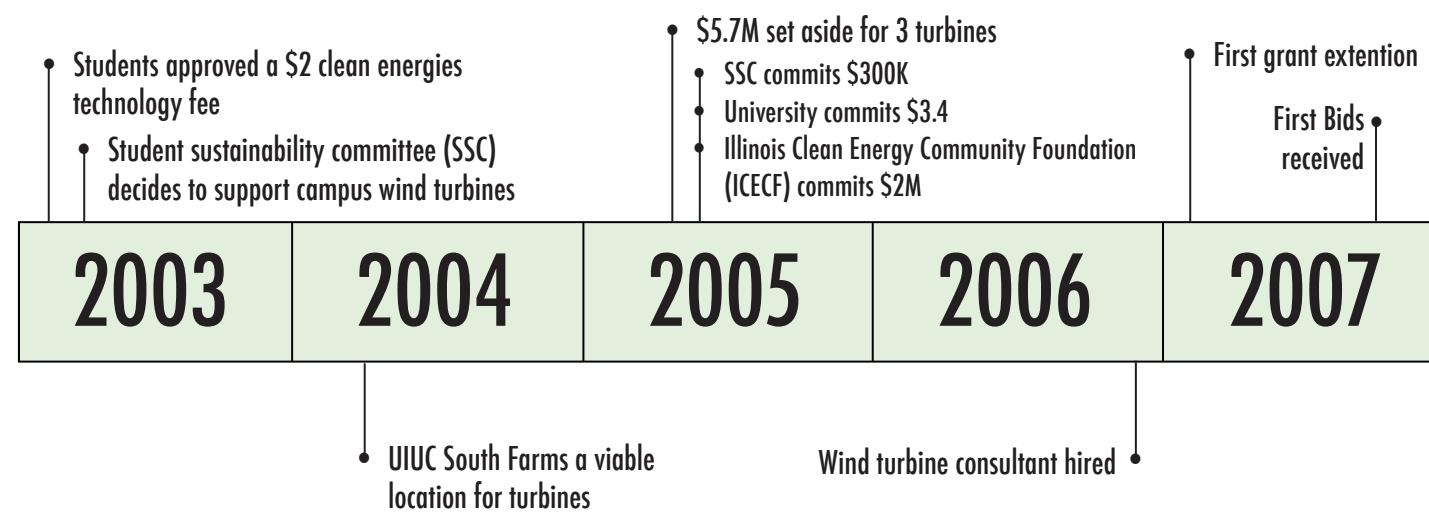
Since 1999, the amount of energy produced from wind turbines has increased tenfold and shows no sign of slowing down. According to the American Wind Energy Association, Illinois is ranked fifth in the nation in terms of installed wind capacity, with almost 2500 MW installed – enough to power over 600,000 homes. This is only 1% of the total wind resource available in Illinois, estimated by the National Renewable Energy Lab. With the price of oil increasing yearly and global conflicts on the rise as a result of increased competition for resources, the rapid growth of wind power is no surprise when considering the many benefits.

Wind turbines emit zero emissions once up and running and when in the proper areas, wind as a resource is not only renewable, but also practically constant. Because of rapid developments in the industry, the cost of building and maintaining turbines continue to decrease at an increasing rate with costs in 2009 at \$2,120 per kilowatt of generation. Like other energy sources, wind turbines also create jobs. As opposed to oil, natural gas,

and nuclear energy, which require years to get up and running once a project is finalized, wind turbines are built quickly once a site is selected. Lastly, wind turbines have an exceptionally low carbon footprint, use relatively little space and minimally impact the environment around them. Wind energy, however, isn't all good news. In the past, wind turbines received scrutiny with opponents arguing wind turbines cause environmental harm by disturbing the flight paths of birds and killing half a million birds a year. In addition, opponents argued the turbines emitted a harmful low-frequency hum, which causes no harm to humans. While wind turbines do cause the death of hundreds of thousands of birds every year, deaths caused by communication towers and windows alone are estimated at over one billion birds a year.

Here on campus, the Student Sustainability Committee recognizes the value of wind turbine technology and worked to implement a wind turbine south of Urbana. Unfortunately, the planned project was cancellation last May. The University terminated the \$5 million project with \$640,000 funded through the student-paid clean energies technology fee after an 8-year battle to get approval.

Early on, the project carried a strong potential for success. In 2003, the Students for Environmental



turbine image by Felissa Amanda Tugade

Concerns initiated the implementation of a \$2.00 per semester fee to be used for the creation of renewable energy projects on campus. The fee received approval in June of that year and the university became the first school in Illinois to use student fees to support renewable energy projects. At the time the Student Sustainability Committee decided to devote the first \$300,000 from the fees towards a wind turbine project.

From there, the project steadily gained steam. By 2005, the project had a suitable location and a study was conducted on the feasibility of the project. The university also requested \$2,000,000 in aid from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation with an additional needed \$3.4 million to be provided by the University. The three planned turbines would directly supply the UIUC campus with roughly 10,500,000-kilowatt hours of electricity, which would support 2.7% of the total campus electricity consumption. However delays, price increases and other obstacles led the University to reduce the scope of the project to only one turbine.

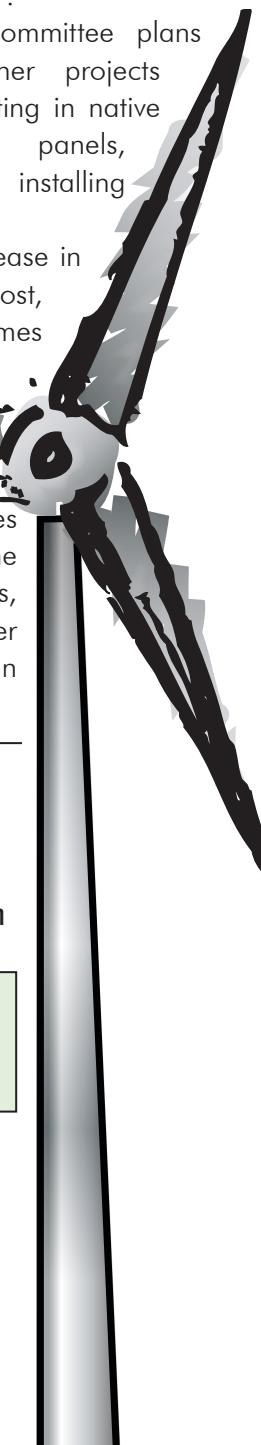
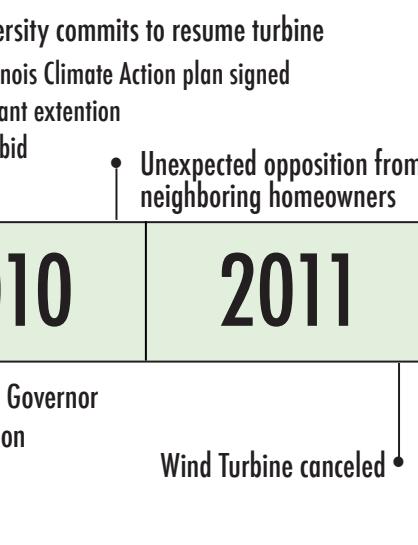
Despite excitement for the project within university environmental groups, Chancellor Herman cancelled the project in December of 2008 citing economic concerns over the cost of the project. Students immediately began protesting the cancellation; expressing anger over the fact the Chancellor cancelled the project during finals to avoid a student response. Both GE and ICECF expressed disappointment with the cancellation and GE even offered a considerable discount on the turbine that the University didn't accept.

The Student Sustainability Committee, however, continued to fight by committing an additional \$200,000 to the turbine project. With the advent of a new Chancellor, the project was resumed in 2010. Nevertheless, the City of Urbana residents began complaining about the project, causing a second cancellation of the turbine. Suhail Barot, Chair of the Committee, explains that, "eventually it came down to the fact that the new Board of Trustees and University administration were more concerned about the opposition from some well-connected Urbana residents than about the students".

The Student Sustainability Committee plans to continue working on other projects around campus, including investing in native landscaping, installing solar panels, sustainability education and installing energy-efficient lighting.

As fossil fuels continue to increase in economic and environmental cost, implementing wind turbines becomes more feasible. On land we

may see vertical wind turbines become as common as telephone poles. With these advancements, the world could push itself closer to removing the burden of an addiction to fossil fuels.



# burning the prairie

by Suhail Barot

**A**lthough prairie is the dominant eco-system of much of Illinois and the central US, less than 1/100th of one percent remains today. Prairie grasses have evolved to exist in conditions of relatively low rainfall, with grazing animals and fire as two major disturbances. The University maintains some natural areas in north-east Urbana as prairie for research projects into this now-rare ecosystem.

As humans have eliminated bison from the upper Midwest, we have to use fire as the primary means of limiting what grows in a restored prairie area – otherwise over time, woody plants, trees, and exotics will establish themselves. Fire also burns off the standing dead plants and “duff” layer of dead plant materials, releasing nutrients back to the soil, and allowing sunlight to reach the soil surface, triggering seeds to germinate. After a burn, the prairie plants grow vigorously, and plant biomass levels generally increase.

Every spring (around spring break) and fall (around thanksgiving), Steve Buck, with the Committee on Natural Areas takes volunteers out to help burn some of these

sites. He tries to burn each site in sections, with each section being burned every 3-4 years, sometimes in the spring and sometimes in the fall. While some of the insect species in a prairie tract don't take kindly to fire, they can recolonize the area within a single summer from an adjacent prairie reservoir.

Burns can only happen if the weather is cooperative. If it's too wet, the plants won't burn, but if it's too dry or too windy, burns can get out of control. A burn is generally a 4 hour or 6 hour affair where volunteers carrying tanks of water and sprayers slowly burn a fire break (a “black” line) after which a couple of people set a head fire with a drip torch, that burns into the wind and (hopefully) slowly burns through to the other side. Volunteers wait at the other side to fight any attempts by the fire to jump over the line.

The smell of smoke and the sights and sounds of ten-foot high flames are simply unforgettable. If you'd like to burn things before you graduate, email Steve at [sbuck@life.illinois.edu](mailto:sbuck@life.illinois.edu) in November or March.



# coal to clean energy tour

by Emily Cross

On Saturday, October 1st, 27 University of Illinois students joined forces with students from universities in Chicago and Iowa for a coal to clean energy tour of Illinois, witnessing firsthand the devastating social and environmental effects of coal and learning about viable alternatives.

Coal Campaign leader Amy Allen from Students for Environmental Concerns (SECs) organized the event with the help of Prairie Rivers Network, Heartland Coalfields Alliance and the Sierra Club. Together they arranged a jam-packed day of activities for its group of 65 students, who visited a range of sites from coal ash dumps to a perennial energy grass plot.

The first stop was in Decatur to check out the Agricultural Watershed Institute's work on making perennial grass. Perennial grasses can be burned for power and heat with

existing technology and compete in prices with propane as a heating fuel. Additionally, planting these energy crops reduce soil erosion which increases water quality.

After leaving Decatur, the group visited one of the last municipally owned power plants, City Water Light and Power facility in Springfield. Recently, the dirtiest boiler was shut down and scrubbers were installed on the others.

Unfortunately, the coal ash that remains from burning coal is washed out with an enormous amount of water that could be used to drink. The mixture creates a slurry that is currently piped and discharged into Sangamon River.

In the afternoon, the group met with local residents impacted by coal mining and waste and learned more about underground mining. Residents discussed their experiences with an

Exxon Mobil coal mine, and how they are unable to rely on the groundwater should they want to resume their farm, meaning they would have to spend more money piping in municipal water.

Few residents stayed in the community after the company came through and purchased as much property as possible, and communities that were once close-knit are now abandoned.

A resident who lived through this experience told the group, “When they call you, they say, ‘You don't have to sell, you don't have to sell,’ but when you decide you don't want to sell, they say, ‘now you must remember, I'm not going away, we'll be here for a long time’”.

Michael Chen, a junior in Psychology from the University of Illinois, says that the most extraordinary part of the tour was meeting with these ordinary people who had their lives permanently changed.

“The information that we gathered here today we could have gathered from textbooks or journal articles,” Michael said. “A photograph can capture the effects of coal on the environment, but it cannot capture the true emotions of a person who has been through this. We really need to spend time with these people in order to do so.”



# students for environmental concerns

by Tamara Liu

September was a month teeming with events and activities for Students for Environmental Concerns (SECS), the oldest and largest environmental organization on campus here at U of I. The group's schedule ranges from solely SECS events—such as a canoeing and camping trip—to collaborations with other organizations—like a planting session with prairie restoration group Red Bison.

This year, SECS took on a new organizational strategy, by creating project groups within the larger RSO entity. Each project group focuses on a particular aspect of the club's big-picture goals, which are to "to work to maintain the stability, integrity, and beauty of the natural world, promote and participate in the sustainable food revolution, [and] pursue clean energy on and off campus," as stated on the SECS website (<http://secs-uiuc.blogspot.com>).



Above: Jeanette Pescitelli enjoys the Students for Environmental Concerns canoeing trip.

photo by Tamara Liu

The project groups this year include: the Beyond Coal Campaign, composting, Earth Week coordination, sustainable landscaping, and weatherization. Members can choose to devote their energies to one of the projects or many. These SECS sects work on tasks during the general club meetings, and also meet separately on non-meeting days, to accommodate for members with multiple interests.

SECS has organized many larger events in the past month, including both hands-on tasks and fun social events. On Sunday, September 11th, SECS gathered together some of its loyal environmentalists for a workday at the Sustainable Student Farm, located by Lincoln and Windsor. Volunteers helped the farm out by harvesting tomatoes and peppers growing in the greenhouse. SECS also recently hosted a bike tune-up, from September 28th to 29th. This is

a large-scale fundraiser held once a semester, where students can come get their bicycles fixed or tuned up for a cheap rate, usually around ten dollars.

SECS also organizes many social events for members, to reward them for all their hard work. The weekend of September 17th, a bunch of SECS members took a trip to Turkey Run in Indiana, for a fun few days in the wild. The whole first day was spent canoeing downriver. Since it turned out to be a warm and sunny weekend, members also had fun jumping off rocks into the river. This eventful day was followed by a night around the campfire, eating hot dogs and s'mores.

In the future, SECS plans to continue working on the club's many goals with the project groups, and of course also plans to continue bringing members closer over their similar interests.

# get involved!

## OCTOBER'S FEATURED RSO: RED BISON

by Sarah Menning

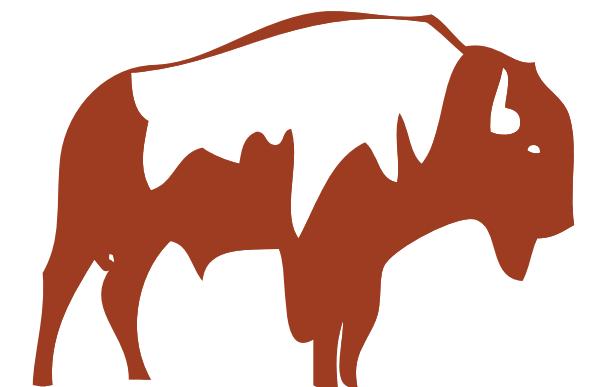
Have you heard of Red Bison? Is it some weird animal in Illinois? Is it the latest burger from Burger King? No! It is the name of an ecological restoration club right here in C-U. For those of you who don't know what ecological restoration is, it's the practice of renewing and revitalizing damaged ecosystems so that they can be more natural and provide services for humans and other life. We call ourselves Red Bison because before the Midwest was settled by pioneers, wild prairie fires were abundant, and Native Americans thought they each looked like a stampede of red bison running across the vast prairie landscape. Today, restorations use controlled fire and other helpful strategies for preserving biodiversity and ecological function on prairie lands and other kinds of habitat.

Red Bison is an RSO on campus that is associated with the YMCA. The focus of our work involves using restoration practices such as invasive (weedy) species removal, native seed collection and dispersal, and garbage removal. We

also like to spend time once in a while just hiking through a natural site to enjoy the beautiful sights and sounds of the area. We have one woodland site and two prairie sites near campus where we do most of our work.

Students in the past and present have really enjoyed being in this club because they get to help the environment directly and get their hands dirty. It's also a great way to learn about the ways of nature and enjoy being outdoors with other students. We are a small but passionate group always looking for more members. If you'd like to learn more, you can email Sarah Menning at [menning1@illinois.edu](mailto:menning1@illinois.edu) or check out our website at <http://redbison.herokuapp.com/>

We hope you can share your passion for the natural world with us!



## STUDENT FARM: UPDATE FROM FARMER ZACK

by Zack Grant

The Sustainable Student Farm has once again slid past the autumnal equinox. The balance of dark and light has now turned in favor of the dark, which will bring us shorter days and the more resilient participants in the great dance of fresh food production. The fields are just about clear of any indication of summer. The last tomatoes and peppers wait on the vines to be picked before they are lost to the crystallization of the first frost. The fields are alive with their harder cousins: head lettuce, radish, mustard greens, kale, and spinach.

The high tunnels (our passive solar heated greenhouses) are being planted and germinating with the bounty of what will be our late fall and early winter production. These tunnels will be brimming with salad greens that can be enjoyed at our campus dining hall units on campus such as Ikenberry through the fall semester.

Hopefully, by the time you are reading this our high tunnels will be covered and protecting our crops. If not, there will be at least one more weekend of volunteer workdays to get the job done. Regardless, if you are interested in coming out to help harvest greens or just to see what we are all about.

Visit our website: ([thefarm.illinois.edu](http://thefarm.illinois.edu)). Hope to see you out there!

~Farmer Zack

# seasonal recipe: pumpkin seeds

What really gets me excited for the fall season and Halloween is when I can finally whip out the tools and carve my pumpkin. I delight in squishing my hands through the goopy guts and eating homemade roasted pumpkin seeds.

High in fiber and protein, full of anti-oxidants and, most importantly, tasty, the pumpkin seed is a bi-product of pumpkin carving that usually goes unnoticed. But not anymore! Follow this recipe to create delicious roasted pumpkin seeds in a variety of flavors, for virtually free!

**1** Begin by separating the seeds from the pumpkin flesh and strings. Wash them well and let them drain in a strainer for 30 minutes, then spread the seeds out evenly on a baking pan.

**2** Preheat your oven to 275 degrees F while your seeds are draining in the strainer.

**3** Once your seeds are evenly spread out, lightly baste the seeds with melted butter, margarine or vegetable oil, along with one of the following combinations of

spices:

NATURAL: 1 teaspoon sea salt or other salt, 4 tablespoons melted butter

SPICY: 4 tablespoons melted butter, 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon thyme,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pepper

HALLOWEEN: 4 tablespoons melted butter, 1 teaspoon cinnamon,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground ginger,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground allspice

**4** Heat the seeds in the preheated oven for 10 to 20 minutes until golden brown, making sure to keep an eye on them. Check every few minutes and stir about every 5 minutes to make sure the seeds do not get overly toasted.

**5** Carefully remove the seeds when they've reached a deliciously golden brown color. Serve either hot or cold depending on your preference.

And that's it! A few simple steps and you are ready to be brimming with delicious pumpkin seed goodness.

## free film screening of climate refugees

The Green Observer and Students for Environmental Concerns will be hosting a special one-night free screening of the film Climate Refugees at 7:30 PM at the YMCA in Latzer Hall on Wednesday, October 19th.

Climate Refugees was directed by award-winning film maker Michael Nash. It was the only film officially selected at United Nations COP15 in Copenhagen and a Sundance Film Festival 2010 selection. It is an extremely powerful film that explores what will happen to millions of people as the climate changes further. Those who are passionate about the social aspect of the environment or have questions about why we should care about climate change must see this film.

There will be free food and drinks provided, and the film will run until 9 PM. For more information, send us an e-mail at [go@greenobservermagazine.com](mailto:go@greenobservermagazine.com).

## class corner

Next Spring, consider registering for UP 466: Energy, Planning and the Built Environment. UP 466 has no prerequisites and is worth 4 credit hours. The course teaches how to think about and plan physical space from an energy-and climate-centric perspective. It focuses on the study of buildings (past and present uses), their place in the environment, and how they can become more sustainable.

## beyond coal campaign

by Kathleen Margillo, visiting student organizer from Green Corps

The University of Illinois is in a supremely unique position when it comes to the coal fight; having already committed to stop burning coal at Abbott Power Plant by 2017, the university is in an elite group of schools nationwide that have committed to moving "beyond coal." However, we can do more. Despite this commitment, the university still keeps private where it invests its endowment, or the university's "savings account". Universities across the country invest in coal mining and coal utility companies, supporting one of the most dirty and dangerous sources of energy. Furthermore, as students, you have a right to know where your university invests its money, a portion of which comes from your tuition dollars.



is invested in some of the dirtiest coal mining and coal utility companies in the nation. The divestment campaign will be using a variety of tactics, from building coalitions on campus and in the Urbana-Champaign community to building people power within the student body to raising media attention around events that we will have.

All in all, we want the student body to recognize their right to know what their university supports, because ultimately, students are the shareholders of a school. If you are interested in getting more information about the Beyond Coal campaign, please like our facebook page at [www.facebook.com/uiucbeyondcoal](http://www.facebook.com/uiucbeyondcoal), follow us on twitter at [www.twitter.com/uiucbeyondcoal](http://www.twitter.com/uiucbeyondcoal), or attend one of our weekly campaign meetings as part of SECS, which meets at 6:30 p.m. in the University YMCA every Wednesday!

# GIY: green-it-yourself GREEN YOUR ROUTINE

It is easy to forget your inner environmentalist during the craziness of your daily routine. Never fear, the Green Observer is here! Keep up your daily green routine and step by step your efforts will make a huge payoff:

- 1 Look for cosmetics from companies that have empty container programs such as Origins and MAC. MAC even rewards customers who return a certain number of empties with a free product!
- 2 Put a plant in your room. It absorbs harmful air particles and adds style to your space.
- 3 Shut off the water when you lather up your hair and body, and spend less time in the shower in general. It's not good for your skin or the environment!
- 4 Although organic products can be more pricey, buy them when you can over other cosmetics and body

and hair products. It makes a difference for your health as well as the environment to avoid harsh chemicals that are frequently used in them.

- 5 For men who shave, stop using running water to clean the blades of your razor. Instead, fill the sink with water and clog it and swish your razor in the pool to save water.
- 6 Even during hectic mornings when you cannot make your coffee, grab a reusable thermos to use at your favorite coffee shop.
- 7 Give your dryer a break. Often times, you don't really need to machine-dry your clothes. Instead, use hangers and save some money and energy.
- 8 Use a programmable thermostat when you go to sleep or are away from your home.

Fall is in full swing and one of the greatest holidays during the school year is around the corner: HALLOWEEN!! Lucky for you, the Green Observer is here to help you rock October 31st, while keeping it green!

An excellent way to save money and the earth is to re-use old costumes. If you don't want to be a costume-repeat offender, swap costumes with friends, hit up the Salvation Army, or thrift through second-hand shops for inspiration!

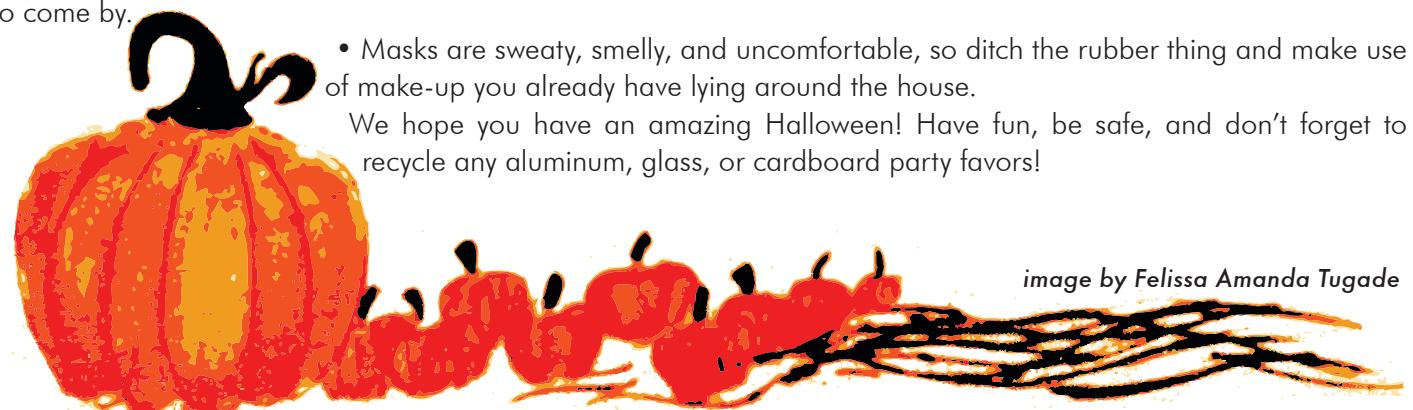
Here are a few costume ideas that you can construct with items lying around your apartment:

- Old Sheet: Poke 3 holes to become a ghost, cut the sheet in strips to transform into a mummy, or wrap and tie the sheet up with golden rope to walk like an Egyptian or ancient Roman
- Cardboard Robot: All you need is a couple of different sized boxes! Get crazy and decorate it with buttons, glitter, stickers, antennas, etc., or keep it simple by using certain boxes... nothing classier than a Natty Light robot!
- Cowboy/Cowgirl: We go to school in Central Illinois... so plaid shirts, jeans/jean skirts, and boots are pretty easy to come by.

- Masks are sweaty, smelly, and uncomfortable, so ditch the rubber thing and make use of make-up you already have lying around the house.

We hope you have an amazing Halloween! Have fun, be safe, and don't forget to recycle any aluminum, glass, or cardboard party favors!

image by Felissa Amanda Tugade



# the plight of the local brewer

by Eric Green

Recently, a friend of mine moved back to Illinois to begin an organic farm. He's interested in grain production for the purposes of brewing, but it doesn't make much sense to distribute locally when malting (a necessary process for grain to be used in brewing) requires you to ship your grain over long distances.

He proclaimed, "There is no such thing as a local beer."

After researching, his words were confirmed to be true. As with most markets, economies of scale, or having cost advantages because of size, exist when it comes to malt houses. One could argue the limitation

of our current economic structure is not accounting for the negative social costs of transporting grain from the farm to a centralized processing plant, and then back to a brew house that may be only a few miles away from the original farm.

But there should be more to local beer than brewing locally; jobs, resiliency, and even quality of the beer are lost with "economies of scale".

Would farmers begin growing more than just corn if there were a malt house nearby? As a home brewer, I would be interested in a truly local beer with locally produced and malted grain.

## feed the thing update

The "Feed the Thing" Recycling program in the City of Champaign was operationalized in December of 2010 after almost two decades of advocacy work by citizens of Champaign and students at the University of Illinois.

The initial goals for the program are to recycle 2,600 tons annually by 2015. Currently, the program's highest monthly collection total (in August of 2011) is 108.2 tons, and is on track to divert 1,000 tons of recyclables from the landfill in its first year. To help students during move-in, special dumpsters were placed in order to collect cardboard during the move-in period.

The "Feed the Thing" program has also taken responsibility for compliance with the State of Illinois's new electronics recycling law, by organizing collection events for e-Waste. This program joins strong existing recycling efforts in Urbana and at the University of Illinois; U of I currently diverting over 55% of its waste from the landfill. We look forward to seeing the program continue to grow and eventually make Champaign a zero-waste community!



**EATS GLASS FOR BREAKFAST.  
PAPER FOR LUNCH.  
AND METAL FOR KICKS.**

Meet your newest neighbor — a real tough act with a soft spot for the environment. And an appetite for all things recyclable. Glass. Aluminum. Paper. It doesn't matter. Just toss it in and stand back. Way back. Because this is The Thing. And no matter how much you feed it, it's always hungry for more.



FEEDTHETHING.ORG

To learn more about Champaign's new multi-family, non-sort recycling program, please call 217-403-4700 or visit [www.feedthething.org](http://www.feedthething.org).

City of CHAMPAIGN **FEED THE THING**

# opinions

## BE YOUR OWN LEADER

by Anne Wave

There's a terrible plague among this nation's citizens, and it's getting worse: ignorance and unawareness of the current state of the environment. It's reflected in those who call climate change the greatest hoax of all time, by those who ignore green initiatives like reusable bags and water bottles, and who don't know the facts about global warming, except that perhaps the polar bears are dying (thank you for that, TV commercials between sitcoms).

According to the 2011 European Commission report, "Long-term Trends in Global CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions", the United States increased emissions by 11% from 1990-2010 while the EU cut its emissions by 7%. Clearly it's not beyond our reach, because Europeans are doing it. It's just a matter of leading and adapting.

What about our leadership? What about President Obama? I have felt my fair share of "Yes We Did!", but I have also had my share of "Wait. Really?" moments with Mr. President. In the 2008 race, President Obama promised he would address climate change, but after two and a half years, empty promises remain. What happened to the fierce urgency of now? The most powerful man in the free world is not pushing out any steps for a greener America – like the smog standards that he tripped all over, or the solar panels that have yet to be re-installed. I mean really, Leonardo DiCaprio outshone Obama in the race to installing solar panels on his home.

We need someone who will fight to clean up the planet, and based on the candidates' words in the primary debates and Obama's lackluster performance, it won't be easy. With a president weak on the issue of climate change and the other candidates looking pretty dismal too, we citizens need to be strong. More bark, more bite. We must be our own leaders when the elected ones don't

**"STUDENTS DON'T  
BECOME SUCCESSFUL  
BY DITCHING THEIR  
BOOKS TO PARTY.  
THE PATH WON'T  
CHANGE IF THE FEET  
THAT WALK IT WON'T."**

come through. Until it becomes a clear national priority, we need to learn as much as we can about the issue to avoid worsening the problem.

It doesn't take a gigantic sum of money to make an impact – sometimes it's just supporting the local farmers at Lincoln Square's farmer's market instead of buying trucked-in produce at Wal-Mart. Often it's even easier than that, like paying attention to the news. Success does not come to those who refuse change, or who take the easy route. Runners don't become fast by walking. Students don't become successful by ditching their books to party. The path won't change if the feet that walk it won't.

There needs to be a bigger push towards a revolution of thought and behavior, and it can start with the smallest of things: deserting your car and riding your bike 'til the snow flies, replacing heat-bulbs with CFL lightbulbs, and educating yourself on the current crisis. Knowing a bit about the state of the world will motivate change. If everyone in the world knew

how dire the situation is, nobody would be sitting silent.

Shame on us for not being the most informed generation, with the news constantly at our fingertips; Twitter even shortens it down to 140 characters for easy access. We have to take ownership for our lack of knowledge and start changing before we run out of time. It's sad to hear that a large number of people don't fully understand the problem's scale, and there's really no excuse for it in this Information Age. Read one extra article every day or watch the news while you eat your Insomnia Cookies. These investments won't take a lot of time, and the knowledge gained can be hugely significant. A year from now, the look backward will be much farther if we start today.

# opinions

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: WASTE

by Felissa Amanda Tugade

To Whom It May Concern:

Oh, dining halls. It is so much better than ramen; that's for sure, but the wait in line is definitely more than three minutes long – especially if you are at Ikenberry. Well-concerned students, I am definitely not here to promote a better "line" strategy, but I am here to bring up an issue about food wastage.

By quarter to six, I see you all lined up, chatting away, chomping away at your greens, and freshly-sliced meat of the day, slurping on your soups and chugging down your nightly dosage of carbon. You see, friends, it's not your eating habits that I'd like to comment on, but it is how much food you are not actually eating.

Now, I know that you have had a long day at school and work, and I know you have to pull an all-nighter. Your angry disposition seems to transfer its energy into the salad tongs since you viciously grabbed the fresh vegetables. As your eyes change into a fiery crimson for the next item, you seem to take even more excessive amounts. I just have to ask you, are you trying to compensate your time wasted in line?

Here's the thing though. When you are putting all that food on your plate, like the noodles served at tonight's dinner, you left at least a small meal size just spilled across the counter. When you went and reached for the meatballs, you dropped at least six on the ground, and when you headed for the broccoli to embellish your alfredo noodles, you dropped at least another four. Now, I'm sure it was an accident, but it's a monkey see, monkey do. The person after you sees what you have done, and they actually do the same thing. It's a chain reaction of

**"YOU CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE AND  
REDUCE THE FOOD  
WASTAGE AT THE  
DINING HALLS.  
BE MINDFUL OF  
WHAT YOU EAT  
AND HOW MUCH  
YOU CAN EAT."**

ignorance. I know that sounds harsh, and please do not get offended. If you do not set an example, others will follow. All that food that you "accidentally" spilled or dropped could have been digested by someone else. Instead, they feed it to the garbage cans.

I also would like to point out that most of you hardly even touch your food. You take so much because you are hungry and looks can be deceiving. However, it happens so often that many of you just take and take and not actually eat the food. You see, the dining halls throw away the food that is untouched already. The employees at the dining halls constantly replenish the food to satisfy your appetites. But if you are not eating the food that you have heavily piled on your plates, then the dining halls are enabling in wasting food. Now, I know it is inevitable to waste food, but perhaps we can minimize it.

Look, I definitely do not want to sound like your mother, but you can make a difference and reduce the food wastage at the dining halls. Be mindful of what you eat and how much you can eat. If your dining hall does not have appetizing food, you can always go to other dining halls.

Grab a couple friends and check out the menus online. Who knows, maybe you can save some of your extra credits, huh? Like alcohol, you have to know what you can handle. That way, things don't go to waste.

Keep it real. Keep it fresh. Keep it clean.

Sincerely yours,  
The Garbage Can Next to the Ice Cream Machine

# **COMING UP:**

RECYCLING IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

BRINGING COMPOSTING TO CAMPUS

2011 SOLAR DECATHLON

GREEN YOUR HOLIDAYS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM AASHE 2011

FEATURED RSO: ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS

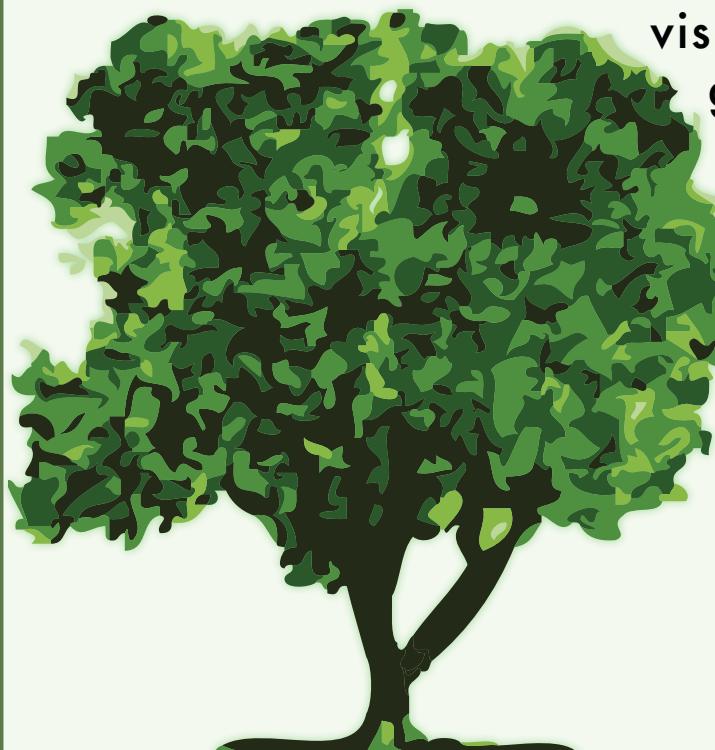
& MUCH MORE!

---

**read green • live green**

**QUESTIONS? SUGGESTIONS?  
WANT TO JOIN THE GO TEAM?**

visit our website at  
[greenobservermagazine.com](http://greenobservermagazine.com)  
or check us out at the  
University YMCA  
(universityymca.org)



the  
**GREEN**  
**OBSERVER**