

# THE UTICA COLLEGE GREEN-TRAX GAZETTE

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## HOORAY FOR US!!!

Every member of the Utica College community should take a moment and pat themselves on the back! In two short months, the progress that we have made toward becoming a greener and more sustainable part of Mother Earth has been amazing! Here are some numbers (courtesy of Rich Kennedy – a member of our Facilities Management team):

1. *Since the first week of February through Spring Break week, we have collected at least 64 cubic yards of glass, metal, and plastic containers for recycling. To give that some perspective, it would take almost eleven of the garbage dumpsters located between Gordon and the library to hold 64 yards;*

2. *Two garbage dumps have been eliminated from the schedule. The Gordon and Strebel dumpsters are no longer emptied on Fridays and we are looking into the possibility of eliminating other scheduled dumps around campus;*

3. *Rich did not have numbers for the volume of recyclable paper that we have collected, but he did report that we have had to increase the number of dumps of the paper dumpster at Gordon to accommodate the extra volume;*

4. *Rich reported that he has been able to replace a few of the chemicals used by UC with products that have been 'green seal certified' ([www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)). The neutral floor cleaner and the heavy-duty bathroom cleaner have been 'swapped out' for their green seal counterparts. The glass cleaner and carpet cleaning solutions will also be replaced as soon as possible. These chemicals will just take a little bit of time to reach campus since the supplier needs to clear out his existing stock. The carpet cleaning solutions will have less 'VOCs' in them. I don't know exactly what that means, but Rich has indicated that we should not experience the problems of noxious smell and headaches that we have had in the past!*

Most of you have probably noticed that the wastebaskets have now been removed from most classrooms. You have also obviously noticed the recycling stations that have been established in the different buildings around campus. I used the word 'obviously' because as Rich's information indicates, we are using them! The residence halls are taking a bit longer to become 'comfortable' with taking those few extra steps that might be necessary to find recycling stations and separate various types of garbage. We are working on plans that might make this process a bit more attractive and convenient for the folks in the residence halls. We are planning to put recycling baskets in the rooms/suites/apartments in the residence halls. Hopefully, this will increase the level of cooperation in our recycling efforts. All of these containers should be in place by fall of 2008. Most of the members of the UC community have been completely wonderful about making this important effort succeed! Now that we have this recycling stuff succeeding, let's see what else can be done to make our community more sustainable.

**DID YOU KNOW:** According to *Green Chic: Saving the EARTH in Style* by Christie Matheson “Making the switch to a CFL (compact fluorescent lightbulb) in just one lamp that’s on for four hours a day will reduce your annual carbon emissions by around 150 pounds. If every household in the U.S. did it, that would save as much energy as it takes to light 2.5 million homes per year and equal the effect, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, of taking 800,000 cars off the road.”

### **UC MUG CLUB COMES TO CAMPUS!**

Thanks to the efforts of Lauren Partyka and Jeff Weissinger and the support of Barnes & Noble and ARAMARK, we are announcing the beginning of the UC Mug Club. You can purchase a lovely, insulated UC mug for \$4.00 and have your mug filled with coffee for \$1.00 (not good for ‘Starbucks’ products). In addition to keeping your coffee hot, these mugs will help us significantly reduce the impact of the cardboard and plastic cups that end up in the garbage. Try to remember to bring your mug with you to meetings that serve coffee so we can cut down on those terrible black plastic cups (we just have to make sure they’ll fit under the spigot of the coffee urns!).

**DID YOU KNOW:** It can take up to 1000 years for a plastic water bottle to decompose in a landfill!

### **OTHER PLANS AND PROJECTS**

Speaking of the bookstore, we will be putting a container outside the bookstore where you can put your used plastic bags – including those bags from Price Chopper and WalMart! Assuming that they are clean and in good shape, Lauren plans on using them for purchases in the bookstore! You also have the option of telling the clerk at the cash register that you don’t want/need a bag when you make a purchase.

We have sent a formal letter to the New York State Senate indicating that Utica College has accepted the challenge to ban the use of Styrofoam on campus. In order to achieve this goal, we are asking that anyone who receives supplies packed in Styrofoam contact the vendor and request that alternative packaging be used. Utica College is served by approximately *20,000* vendors (I didn’t know that!). Most companies seem to be moving away from the use of Styrofoam, but we still need to be persuasive in our efforts to reduce the use of this ‘gift’ to the Earth that just keeps on giving!

As printers on campus need to be replaced, we are going to replace them with equipment that is capable of 2-sided printing. If your office needs to replace a printer, please contact James Farr for equipment recommendations. Some of our printers already have this capability, and we encourage everyone to use that option whenever possible. Some other recommendations from the Computer Help Desk include the use of ‘print preview’ to make sure you are printing only the pages you need, and designating only the pages you need on the print instructions.

Speaking of paper, ‘scratch pads’ made from one-sided printing jobs are available in the copy center. They are available in various sizes – please stop by!

One more printer-related item: G.R.R.O.W.L.S. (Golden Retriever Rescue Operated With Love Statewide) is taking empty printer cartridges (not Epson) and redeeming them for \$2.00 each. They will even supply the packaging and pay the postage! Nancy Hollins has agreed to help me with this project. You can still take your empty cartridges to the Computer Help Desk or the library, but you can also drop them off at my office (Faculty Center 214) and we will send them to this wonderful rescue operation. *Woof!*

Ground has been broken for the co-generation power plant being built as a joint venture by UC and St. Luke’s Hospital. If you’re like me and don’t really know what a ‘co-generation

power plant' is, here's the scoop from Rob Cross (our Director of Environmental Health & Conservation – and chair of the Sustainability Committee): *"UC will be powered by this natural gas fired power station (being built on the grounds of St. Luke's Hospital), providing reliable power. Where's the green? Steam from the project will be used to heat St. Luke's Hospital, and power won't be lost in transmission lines."* We are hoping this project will be completed by the end of 2008.

**DID YOU KNOW:** You do not have to clean every particle out of containers before you recycle them! In fact, you can even redeem that empty Corona bottle without sucking the lime wedge out of it! Now, this doesn't mean you can just toss the container of moldy cream cheese into the recycling bin, but you don't have to scrub every particle out of it.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

*Turn Off the Lights!* I certainly don't want people to be sitting in the dark, but I am still amazed at the number of classroom lights that are left on when the room is empty. If you are leaving a room and no one else is coming in, please try to remember to turn off the lights.

*Report leaky faucets!* Rob Cross actually measured the water that is wasted when a faucet is dripping. A slow drip (approximately one drip per second) will waste four gallons of water per day. That translates to **1460** gallons per year. A faster drip can waste twenty-five gallons of water per day, adding up to **9125** gallons per year. To put that in perspective, the in-ground pool that I used to have held 10,000 gallons of water! If you know of a dripping faucet, please contact Facilities Management (work orders are available through the UC web site: [www.utica.edu/finance/facilities](http://www.utica.edu/finance/facilities)).

*Turn OFF the water faucets in the restrooms!* I am amazed and confused at how often people leave the water running in the sinks in the restrooms. I have no idea why people would do this. *How many paper towels do you really need?* I know it's important to wash your hands, and I know we live in a germ-a-phobic society, but I'm not sure anyone needs a ten-foot long strip of paper towels to get the job done.

*Car pooling when possible.* I am the first person to admit that car pooling isn't always possible. During my 20 plus years at UC I have never been able to find a way to car pool from my part of the universe. But if there is a possible way to save those precious bucks spent on gasoline, why not give it a try? There is one area of driving that can easily be eliminated: the 'necessity' that some people seem to think exists for driving from the residence halls to classroom buildings. If I had not heard people admit to doing this with my own ears, I absolutely would never believe it.

**DID YOU KNOW:** According to *The Green Book* by Elizabeth Rogers and Thomas M. Kostigen, U.S. households dispose of nearly one hundred BILLION plastic bags annually. If each of us could reduce this number by two bags per week, we would each throw away more than 100 fewer bags per year. Tied together handle to handle, this collection of plastic bags would make a rope long enough to wrap around the earth more than 126 times!

### **LOOKING INTO THE GREEN CRYSTAL BALL**

We are asking the Office of Financial Affairs (who oversees the physical stuff on campus) to develop a policy for donating and planting trees on campus. Several individuals and organizations have expressed an interest in making green donations to our community. I think this is a wonderful way to support sustainability – and increase the beauty of Utica College.

EARTH DAY is April 22<sup>nd</sup>! Our Sustainability Committee will be setting up a table (hopefully with popcorn!) that will contain more information about sustainability. It would be absolutely wonderful if other organizations could develop and sponsor events in honor of Mother Earth.

The National Wildlife Federation is offering campuses nationwide the opportunity to host the groundbreaking Earth Day broadcast *Chill Out: Campus Solutions to Global Warming*. This is completely free – all it takes is an internet connection, speakers, projection equipment – and an organization that wants to host this event! If anyone is interested, please contact me (Carol Downing, 792-3155, [cdowning@utica.edu](mailto:cdowning@utica.edu)) or visit <http://campuschillout.org/>.

ARAMARK is planning several activities designed to emphasize sustainability in the days around Earth Day. One of the more ingenious ideas is to designate a “tray-less day” in the cafeteria. I did not realize this, but apparently an amazing amount of energy is expended in the cleaning of trays! Eliminating trays also reduces the amount of wasted food!

We are thinking ahead in several areas, including the following:

Is there an easy way to collect rainwater for use in watering the gardens/trees/flowers on campus?

Should we contact the Utica Auditorium food service to suggest that they use ‘green’ food containers similar to the ones that ARAMARK is now using?

We would like to see a campus group volunteer to organize and run a drive to collect clothes, furniture, and other stuff that students do not want to take with them when they leave campus. There are many local charities that could benefit from this kind of activity. Please feel free to contact me (or Rob Cross, the chair of the Sustainability Committee) if you are interested.

We have been assured by the folks at the radio station that, in addition to a day filled with great music and great fun, **MOOSESTOCK** will be as green as possible. WPNR rocks – Doug Croft, Jay Lehmann and all the folks that work at the station have really stepped up and led the effort to make UC a greener community.

In closing, I would like to say that it never occurred to me that we could do so much in such a short time. Someone told me that they were glad to see that there were people at UC who had enough ‘extra time’ to take on this project. Although I don’t really think that was meant as a compliment, I will only respond by saying that it really has never been a matter of having extra time or not having extra time. Generations of future UC students, faculty, staff, and administrators – as well as everyone else on the planet – deserve to have a campus community that does everything possible to honor and preserve our home. My sincere thanks to everyone for the progress that we have made.

Respectfully Yours,  
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