Bon Voyage, Class of 2007! Hello, MRF.

Every academic year ends with a bang for Facilities Services, and this year was no exception. On second thought, this year was an exception – there was a much bigger “bang.” Our distinguished Commencement speaker, President Bill Clinton, brought a few additional twists to Commencement preparations, and a record breaking audience. Just four days later, we had completed the monumental tasks of dorm clean-out and Reunion preparation (setting up for events and making up hundreds of guest rooms).

These things we were prepared for. Our staff expect to work long hours during the end of year transition. Folks get tired, and sometimes stressed, but they always pull together in unexpected ways to help each other make it happen. What we were not prepared for was the sheer volume of stuff left behind by departing students. This year there was a marked increase in what was trucked to our Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) for sorting. We have not determined the reason for the increase, but this year’s effort was massive, with nearly everyone in the department, including managers, taking a turn sorting in the MRF.

What does it mean to be sorting in the MRF? It means facing truckloads of bagged refuse, opening each and every bag, and sorting through what might be reused or recycled to reduce our contribution to the waste stream. It aint pretty. Bags of clothing and books might also contain the moldy remnants of last month’s party platter. The MRF floor is slick with food waste. Sorters wear latex gloves and count themselves lucky to “score a bottle of Febreze” to spray into particularly nasty bags before diving in.

Special thanks to our staff, not only for the fantastic public events they contribute to, but also for the dirty jobs that go on behind the scenes. Take heart folks. Discussions are in the works to explore how we might improve the MRF scene next year.
Custodial Services Relocates

Our Custodial Services division has temporarily relocated to the Harris Farmhouse on Route 125, next to the MRF. Their offices in the Service Building are soon to be engulfed in construction activities for the Biomass facility, so they needed a safe, quiet place to continue doing business. It’s a funky space, but they’ve made it home. And they have great views of the Adirondacks.

Projects occurring during the weeks of June 11th and 18th:

Adirondack House – Exterior painting has begun.

82 Adirondack – Installation of a new water main and fire safety sprinkler system begins.

97 Adirondack View – Is undergoing major interior and exterior renovations. There will be a handicap accessible lift from the ground floor to the main level. A dormer at the back of the house is being enlarged to provide more second floor bedroom space.

Axinn Center – Exterior stone work continues and is nearing completion on the west wing. All west wing offices are ready for final painting, while sheetrock and windows are being installed in east wing offices. Installation of building mechanical systems for the new wings is in progress.

Battell – Masonry repairs to exterior steps, and carpet replacement in the north wing.

Bread Loaf – Birch will be ready for use by the School of English, after having its foundation replaced. Landscaping and masonry will continue at Birch through the month of June. Gilmore and Tamarack foundations will also be completed in time for the School of English. Homer Noble will receive exterior painting and a new roof (this work may continue into July).

Center for the Arts – Refinishing the floor in room 232.

Chateau – A storm drain is being replaced.

College Library, Garden for the Seasons – Some of the original plantings have proven ill suited to the locale and have had difficulty competing with native grass and weeds. Facilities
Services Horticulturalist Tim Parsons submitted a proposal to The Committee on Art in Public Places (CAPP) to enhance the surrounding meadow and add plantings to the vegetated swale. Tim’s proposal was accepted and funded by CAPP, and work on restoring the surrounding meadow began last month. The meadow was tilled, and sown with a New England wildflower mix which includes native grasses, wild lupine, asters, and butterfly milkweed. Next month our landscaping crew hopes to begin planting some 300 perennials along the swale.

637 College Street – Installation of a new water main and fire safety sprinkler system begins.

Fitness Center – Installation of an air conditioning system is in progress, and expected to be completed by June 15th.

Hillcrest – The project is wrapping up with exterior landscaping and construction of a stone sitting wall. Faculty begin moving in on June 18th, and the Colloquium space is scheduled for use by the summer language program.

Johnson – The loading dock is currently being repaired.

Kenyon Arena – The underside of the main entrance roof canopy will be cleaned and painted.

The Mill – Is off-line this summer for kitchen and bath renovations, as well as installation of a new heating system.

Men’s Soccer Field – Reconstruction of the men’s soccer field began last week, to be completed by August 27th. The project involves removal of topsoil and underlying loam, construction of a new drainage system, and new sub-grade and base. The playing surface will be a synthetic grass "filled-turf" field with rubber and sand infill that will allow for play in any weather condition. The western berm will be redesigned for better viewing, and the field will be re-oriented closer to the berm. The coaches’ and players’ area will be moved to the east side of the field, and bleacher pads will be installed at the top of the western berm.

Monroe – Classrooms 222 and 405 are being upgraded with “smart technology.”

Ross Commons Complex – Repair to the stone façade at LaForce Hall and a sidewalk replacement is nearly complete. Work will finish with lawn restoration in the Ross courtyard.

Service Building – Preliminary to starting construction of the Biomass facility, a steam line in the Service Building parking lot will be uncovered for assessment. Excavation will occur between June 18th and 20th. It will not impact traffic passing through the Service Building parking area.

110 South Main – This two-family home is receiving major interior renovations. The first floor will become a handicap accessible apartment.
**Student Dorm Rooms** – Interior painting of various vacant student rooms.

**Turner House** – Installation of a new water main and fire safety sprinkler system begins.

**Trivia:**

The Valentine’s Day blizzard is a distant memory for most, but not distant enough for many of our staff. In March we asked, “How many Facilities staff labor hours were devoted to snow removal for the three day period of February 14-16 as a result of the blizzard?” Public Safety Officer Sandra Laird made a “lucky guess” of 1500 hours. “I was on duty but didn't have time to count heads.”

1174.75 Facilities Services staff labor hours were dedicated exclusively to snow removal, including 160.5 hours of overtime.

Next Question: How many dorm rooms were prepared for Reunion Weekend guests by our Custodial Services division?

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**Facilities Green Bits:**

**Blowing in the Wind**

The College wind turbine has been up and running since fall 2005. In 2006 it generated 4586 KWH of renewable energy that otherwise would have been purchased from our area provider CVPS. Year to date data analyzed through March shows 2011 KWH generated thus far in 2007.

For detailed performance data on our windmill and others, visit the Vermont Wind Program’s web site*: [http://www.vtwindprogram.org/](http://www.vtwindprogram.org/). To navigate to our data, click on Wind Turbine Locations, Middlebury College, Performance Data.

*Not recommended for the statistically challenged.

**Testing the Feasibility of a Locally Grown Source of Biomass**

By Jack Byrne, Campus Sustainability Coordinator

In looking at the options for meeting our need for 20,000 tons of woodchips per year, one that looked promising was the possibility of growing biomass on fallow farmland in Addison County. Last summer, Jack Byrne, Campus Sustainability Coordinator and Tom Corbin, Director of Business Operations toured an experimental willow shrub plantation in northern New York operated by the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Central-northern New York was historically an abundant producer of willows for the basket making industry and there is interest in reviving that practice for energy production.

We have established a joint effort with Dr. Tim Volk of SUNY-ESF who has years of research experience with willows to conduct a pilot project on 10 acres of college land to the west of the campus. Recently, Steve Weber, College Forester, worked with a team from SUNY-ESF to plant 30 different varieties of willow at a density of about 6,000 willow whips per acre. After the first year of growth the plantings will be coppiced, i.e., cut back to the base to force the growth of more branches. They will then grow for another two years reaching 15 to 20 feet in height. In the fourth year they will be cut and chipped for use in the biomass burner. The re-growth from the willows will be harvested every three
Harvest will be done with standard corn harvesting equipment using a modified cutting head. Yields of around 25 to 30 tons per year per acre at 45% moisture content have been obtained in the New York trials. The results of the pilot and the lessons learned will be shared with agricultural landowners and farmers in the region with the hope that they would eventually go into business producing willows for energy. The pilot project will also look carefully at how to minimize or eliminate the use of fertilizers and pesticides in the cultivation of willows.

College Forester Steve Weber and the SUNY research team manually feeding “willow whips” into the willow planter. The whips are fed manually into four planting tubes. They are cut into 8” pieces and inserted into the earth. Four rows are planted with each pass. Rows are spaced so that the harvester will be able to drive through the willow growth to cut the plants for harvesting.

Questions about the information provided, and trivia submissions may be directed to hoyenski@middlebury.edu. Trivia contest winners receive a $5.00 gift certificate to The Grille. Facilities Services staff members are ineligible to participate in the trivia contest. Read past issues of the Facilities Services newsletter at http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/fs/about/newsletters.htm