



## ALUMNI NEWS

Middlebury College alumni provide environmental leadership and stewardship worldwide, and provide inspiration and contacts for current students. We'll post on-going Alumni News received between publications of *Environmental News* on our web site so whether you were an ES major while at Middlebury or have since found an environmental calling through your work or civic activities, we would love to hear from you.

**Bob McGirr '73** provides consulting services to two local environmental consulting companies in Maine. One specializes in environmental assessments of properties that may be contaminated and that might legally impact a new owner or mortgage holder. In his other consulting position, Bob is involved with air quality modeling and permitting for electrical power plants.

**Trina Waters '78** is the coordinator of the Big Backyard Environmental Program in six elementary schools in Lexington, MA. The program is now training eighty parent volunteers a year to provide hands-on introductions of the natural world to students in the elementary schools.

**Tom Howe '79** is now the Director of Land Conservation at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. He spends much of his time helping landowners set up arrangements that ensure the permanent protection of their land and continued provision of public benefit to local communities. He lives with his wife, Sarah Thorne, and their two children on a 190-year old farm in Gilmanton, N.H.

**John Schubert '80**, Mayor Pro Tem (vice mayor) of Bend, Oregon, lives in a co-housing community near Pilot Butte. John has a lengthy environmental career working on a host of sustainable transportation initiatives for central Oregon. In addition to his city government work, John works for St. Charles Medical Center as their Employee Commute Options Coordinator and for the Deschutes National Forest as a trails specialist.

**Andrew Dana '81** has recently developed a Model Conservation Easement for the Land Trust Alliance. Since entering private law practice in Bozeman in 1991, Dana represents land trusts in Montana ranging from national to local organizations, assisting them in land conservation transactions, easements, monitoring and enforcement. He also serves on the Governor's Upper Yellowstone River Task Force which seeks consensus in balancing divergent river management goals among a host of constituent groups.

**Lis Grinspoon '90** first became interested in China's forest policy while working on her undergraduate degree in East Asian Studies at Middlebury. Since then she has completed a Master of Forestry degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, lived in China for several years and consulted for the Environmental Defense Fund and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Lis received her PhD from UC Berkeley in 2001. She lived in Sichuan Province for two years conducting research for her dissertation that focused on the shift in property rights to collective forestland in China's economic transition.

**Scott Reid '94** has begun graduate school focusing in Recreation and Resource Management at Virginia Tech. Prior to returning to academia, Scott was in Colorado working as the education coordinator for the Leave No Trace (LNT) program. In close partnership with organizations such as NOLS, AMC, Outward Bound, ADK, USFS, NPS, BLM, USFW, he developed tools to promote LNT training, practices and ethics.

**Alexander Lee '97**, founder and tireless promoter of Project Laundry List (<http://www.laundrylist.org/>), is developing a traveling art show promoting the beauty of clothes drying from clotheslines.

**Ryan Case '00** is working with John Todd in Burlington, Vermont at Ocean Arks International (<http://www.oceanarks.org/>) promoting ecological wastewater treatment systems.



## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

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### Mission

The Program in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College provides students with an interdisciplinary, liberal arts education. It focuses on diverse facets of the relationship between humans and the environment through study in breadth and depth.

### Administration

Chris McGrory Klyza  
Director of Environmental Studies  
Nan Jenks-Jay  
Director of Environmental Affairs  
Connie Leach Bisson  
Campus Sustainability Coordinator  
Janet Wiseman  
Environmental Studies Coordinator

### ES Steering Committee

John Mauro, ES  
Chris McGrory Klyza, Poli Sci/ES  
Nan Jenks-Jay, ES  
John Elder, English/ES  
Steve Trombulak, Biology/ES  
Peter Ryan, Geology  
Jonathan Isham, Economics  
Andi Lloyd, Biology  
Andrea Olsen, Dance

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Environmental Council meets with Acting President Ron Liebowitz.

## Dear Alumni and Friends:

In September 1994, President John McCardell recognized the contributions of both the Environmental Studies Program (ES Program) and the campus environmental programs in his State of the College address in which he designated literary study, language study, international study, and the environment as peaks of excellence.

The President established an ad hoc Committee on the Environment that in 1995 prepared a report and recommendations for the administration suggesting ways to continue improving the ES Program and the College's environmental awareness. When the College underwent its ten-year reaccreditation in 1999-2000 with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), the peaks and the environment appeared prominently in the report as "strengths."

In January 2001, at the request of the administration, ES Program Director Chris Klyza prepared an internal assessment of the program following which three distinguished faculty from Dartmouth, Harvard and Colby conducted an external review of Middlebury's ES Program.

Their findings began:

*Since its last outside review twelve years ago, the Environmental Studies Program at Middlebury has achieved remarkable success in developing a rich array of courses and subspecializations involving contributions by more than forty faculty members from fields ranging as widely as Physics and Dance... The Middlebury ES Program is one of the outstanding interdisciplinary environmental studies programs in the country.*

At the same time, an extensive strategic planning process was underway for the entire Environmental Peak of Excellence (academic and sustainable college) chaired by Nan Jenks-Jay, Director of Environmental Affairs. Provost and Executive Vice President Ron Liebowitz established an Environmental Peak Task Force to set goals for the next five years. The Task Force, a group who met regularly for a year, included Nan Jenks-Jay, Chris Klyza, Sallie Sheldon, Jim Larrabee, Kathy Morse, Amy Seif, Janet Wiseman and Oren Frey '02. The highly participatory process had subcommittees on special topics, open meetings and two environmental faculty and staff retreats in a quest to define the future of the Environmental Peak for the next five years.

In September 2001, the Peak Task Force presented their [Environmental Peak Report and Recommendations 2001: A Vision for the Future](#) to Acting Provost Alison Byerly. The report outlined one hundred forty action items from twelve key work areas. With our goals set and course charted, many recommendations have already been undertaken. High priority items for this year include:

- Sustainably renovate an existing facility as a new Environmental Center
- Work with other departments to identify two new faculty positions to explicitly support the ES Program and Environmental Peak
- Establish a Field Station and Rustic Retreat — preferably at the Bread Loaf Campus
- Increase staff support in order to undertake administration of grants and new initiatives

- Continue to expand international environmental opportunities and collaborations
- Establish a carbon neutral campus with zero emissions
- Create a transportation management plan and circulation system that reduces dependence on single occupancy vehicles coming to and from, as well as, on campus
- Make local and sustainably produced goods a priority for college purchasing

Though our action chart is ambitious for the next five years, our goal is straightforward—to develop environmental leaders, new environmental knowledge, and sustainable practices to meet the complex local and global challenges of the future.

We are thrilled to report that our unanimous top priority—renovation of an existing facility as a new Environmental Center—has received a green light from the Administration and we are in the early stages of fund raising and planning for this facility. We will keep you posted on our progress with the Environmental Center and with implementing the recommendations of the 2001 Environmental Peak Report.

Nan Jenks-Jay  
Director, Environmental Affairs

Chris McGrory Klyza  
Director, Environmental Studies Program



## FACULTY PROFILE

### Professor Pete Ryan Engages Students in Active Research

"Conducting research with students is the best kind of student/faculty relationship there is." Those were Professor Pete Ryan's parting words to me, echoing the sentiment of many others in Middlebury's Geology Department.

Since Pete's hiring, with a joint appointment to the Geology Department and Environmental Studies in 1998, he has actively involved his students in his research, co-publishing works and supporting research travel to Costa Rica, Scotland, California, Oregon and Montana. In recent years, Pete has received grant funds from the Ecosystem Research Group / Intergovernmental Governors Panel on Acid Rain, the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Mine Waste Program to support his research. Closer to campus, Pete has served on the Environmental Council and the Sustainable Campus Subcommittee of the Environmental Peak Task Force.

Pete engages his students in his research and community-related projects. For the last few years, Pete has been assisting EPA with research on the Elizabeth Mine in South Strafford, Vermont and has used his familiarity with this Superfund remediation site as a field opportunity for his environmental geology and environmental geochemistry classes. Originally used to produce sulphuric acid in the early 1800's, copper was eventually mined from the South Strafford mine site through the 1950's until its ultimate closure in 1959. The remnants of this once economic boom for Vermont include a ravine full of tailings, high in metals such as iron, copper and aluminum. As natural precipitation falls through the tailings-filled ravine, the pH of the contaminated rain registers in the range of

two to three (one hundred times more acidic than natural rain). This acidic leachate and one ton of metal flows daily from a tributary at the bottom of the pile into the Ompompanusuc River. "My students get to see geochemistry in action," notes Pete, who hopes the field investigations will influence further studies by his students.

The Elizabeth Mine project became a focal point for Maggie Sullivan '01 (ES/Geology), who devoted her senior thesis to providing a baseline study of the streambed sediments for EPA. Her detailed work resulted in the discovery of a downstream tributary entering the Ompompanusuc River that tested higher than surrounding areas for metals. EPA followed the tributary upstream and discovered elevated copper in sediments emanating from previously undocumented pit and tailings sources.

As the Elizabeth Mine remediation advances to the reclamation stage, geology classes at Middlebury will still be able to study the site. Community stakeholders, after years of work studying the site with the aid of four college professors including Pete Ryan, have unanimously agreed to have the main tailings capped with a geoliner, revegetated, and the run-off directed through a treatment plant and wetland. Some of the old works of the mine will be preserved as the mine does have historical value for the region. The small amount of tailings connected with this area will also be managed by a treatment plant and wetland. Pete's classes will continue to study the water and sediment quality of the tributary and river, as well as the wetlands, as they are developed.

Pete has also been involved in studies of frog malformities along the southern shores of Lake Champlain in conjunction with work done by biologists Jim Andrews and Tom Root. In 1999, Andy Wall '99.5 (ES/Geology) compared sediment from two marshes and discovered that the marsh with the greater frog malformity rate had higher levels of heavy metals (zinc, chromium and nickel) than the marsh with fewer deformed frogs.

Andy accompanied Professor Ryan to the Macaulay Institute in Aberdeen, Scotland to perform further research on the speciation of metals, bringing additional soils from the two sites. The two will return to the Institute again in 2002 to do further research. Other joint research opportunities on the horizon for some of

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*Pete engages his students in his research and community-related projects.*

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Pete's future students include the study of metal bearing rock in Costa Rica, England, Scotland and coastal California.

In addition to some amazing research opportunities, students working with Pete get experience in publishing in professional journals and presenting at relevant professional meetings such as Holly Carlson '02 (ES/Geology) did last spring before the Northeastern Section of the Geologic Society of America on the ability of soils to buffer acid rain. Pete seems to have equal rapport with students in the classroom or in the height of research... "I just love it when we're sitting there, with the raw data before us, trying to make sense of the information. It's exciting to be working with students at these moments."

Pete's web site address is:  
<http://www.middlebury.edu/~pryan/>



## Green Dining: Environmental Leadership in the Kitchen

Enter a Middlebury Dining Hall for any meal and you will find at least one meat and vegetarian entrée, salad bar, fresh fruit, sandwich bar, cereal, bagels, dessert, ice cream and frozen yogurt, more than fifteen choices of beverage (including soy milk), and condiments to strike a chord with the many differentiating palettes of the College's diverse student body. But Director of Dining Services Peter Napolitano and the college's chefs and support staff hang their hats on a lot more than tasty cuisine, complementary proteins and clean pots. For years, Midd Dining administrators and staff have been leaders in initiating sustainable practices for the Middlebury campus.



Vermont apples at every meal.

### Local & Organic

Charlie Sargent, chief purchaser for Midd Dining, is committed to building relationships that support local food producers. With Midd Dining providing upwards of 7,000 meals a day, and working from a budget of nearly three million dollars, there is a lot of food to order. In addition, the college's most recent food vendor bid request emphasized Midd Dining's commitment to purchasing locally produced products. Burlington Food Service of Burlington, Vermont was awarded this bid and regularly supplies the college with food products from thirty-three Vermont food producers.

Middlebury also incorporates fifteen organic products on an on-going basis into the campus cuisine. Midd Dining works directly with farmers and local produce distributors to increase the amount of local produce used in the dining halls, recognizing the potential income they can offer farmers by steering more of the College's annual produce purchases toward local growers. Last fall's Thanksgiving feast featured fresh turkey, chicken sausage, braised venison, potatoes, carrots, buttermilk, cider and porter from Vermont food growers and producers, but students are regularly treated to in season fruits and vegetables, maple syrup and local dairy products.

### Compost

An unfortunate by-product of any mealtime is food waste. On a national average, food waste comprises upwards of 7% of the municipal solid waste stream. Not for Middlebury College. A collaboration between Midd Dining and Facilities Management annually turns 282 tons of food waste into rich piles of compost for use in greenhouses and as soil amendment on campus. Food prep scraps, post-consumer food residuals, waxed cardboard, paper towels, napkins and food prep waste paper — some 70% of the College's food waste — is composted.

### Biodegradable Utensils

Even when Midd Dining moves outdoors for picnics or large College celebrations, the compost program gains momentum. Thanks to an idea from dining hall manager Russell Hulst, the College uses biodegradable utensils made from cornstarch. When the picnic is over, the paper plates, napkins, paper cups and utensils all go into biodegradable trash bag liners and are delivered to the compost facility. It is remarkable that approximately 90% of the waste generated by these large outdoor events, many feeding several thousand people, goes directly into the College's composting system instead of the landfill. While a few ants may join the festivities, piles of waste no longer outlive the memory of these dining feasts.

### Reusable Travel Mugs

To dissuade the use of disposable cups on campus, every new student, staff, and faculty member is given a reusable mug by Midd Dining. All are encouraged to use these cups for their take out beverage needs. As one crosses the campus, the mugs are common appendages hooked to belts and backpacks, or held close on a wintry morning filled with a steamy beverage as the race to class begins.

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Student with a reusable travel mug.



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## Green Design

In fall 2002, Midd Dining will be serving meals from a new dining hall in Ross Commons that will highlight international fare while providing westerly vistas of the Adirondacks and Addison County farmland. Design engineers and architects have worked with Midd Dining staff to incorporate a series of environmental features into the equipment and layout of this new facility. Natural light will fill the space from large, triple-glazed, westerly facing windows. Variable speed fans over the stoves will sense heat and smoke thereby increasing or decreasing the hood exhaust rate as needed to conserve electricity. Director of Operations George Whitney is exploring designs with Vermont furniture manufacturers for chairs and tables made of locally harvested, certified wood for possible use

in the Ross Commons dining hall.

Adequate storage for food waste and recyclables has been included in the building's space allocations. Low flow faucets and energy efficient lighting will be used throughout the dining hall. Heat generated from the motors of the compressors for the walk-in coolers and freezers will be used to heat the mechanical workroom. When air conditioning is required, sensors will allow an automatic adjustment of the pump speed as the demand for cooling falls. As part of the Act 250 environmental review, staff from Efficiency Vermont reviewed and approved the energy components of the entire facility. Standards from the College's Guiding Principles Framework for Sustainable Design and Construction were also applied.



Ron measuring old fryer oil for biodiesel project.

## Greenhouse

When winter sets in, Dining Services' goals of using organic and locally grown foods do not go into hibernation. "Buying locally grown organic vegetables is definitely a challenge during Vermont winters," notes Dining Services Associate Director Matt Biette. "We regularly have to look to Florida and California for fresh organic salad greens." However, Matt is currently managing a demonstration project in hopes of developing an efficient winter gardening technique that could yield local salad greens throughout the cold months.



Watering in the greenhouse.

## Biodiesel

While Midd Dining has provided strong academic links through work study, student employment, and student and faculty research at the greenhouse, their research arm doesn't stop there. Ron Schildge '03 received an Environmental Grant from the Environmental Council in 2001 to investigate the feasibility of converting waste vegetable oil from the kitchens into biodiesel fuel. Midd Dining generates about 40 gallons of waste vegetable oil per week that is currently managed through the compost system. Last spring, with the support of Midd Dining, Ron processed several gallons of biodiesel fuel that he used in his own 1990 VW Diesel Jetta. With a grant in 2002 from the National Wildlife Federation, Ron is now working with Midd Dining, Facilities Management and the Patricia Hannaford Career Center, the local vocational high school, to produce biodiesel for some of the diesel run College equipment, which consume over 7000 gallons of diesel fuel annually. Ron also teaches classes on alternative energy at the Hannaford Center and works with high school students on special projects related to this topic.

It will be exciting to see what environmental feat Dining Services cooks up next!



More information on the greenhouse and food composting system is available at [www.middlebury.edu/~environment](http://www.middlebury.edu/~environment)

## FEATURED SPEAKERS ON CAMPUS

## Environmental Affairs

### Scott Margolin Lecture

*"Warning—This Book May Change Your Life!  
Saving Oneself and the World through the  
Work of Imagination"*

Lawrence Buell  
John P. Marquand Professor of English  
Harvard University  
April 19, 2001

Before an over-flowing audience last spring, Harvard Professor of English and American Language and Literature Lawrence Buell engaged the question of what the arts and humanities can bring to our understanding and amelioration of the current environmental crisis. Buell argued strongly that art and literature can and should play a role in environmental activism: "My claim, in broadest terms, is that re-environmentation of environmental values is just as crucial a need as scientific/technological and legal solutions." While history presents numerous cases of how creative artistry can make an actual difference in the lives of individuals and societies, Prof. Buell focused particularly on the work of Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson. While the work of these authors is familiar to many, Buell's lecture delved beneath the surface of their texts to demonstrate how a creative mind like Carson's or Thoreau's can transform statistics to represent the living and breathing consequences of our environmental (or anti-environmental) behavior. Buell concluded with Carson's "Fable of Tomorrow," a numbing apocalyptic vision that she then supports with scientific data. But the data alone, argued Buell, would not have sufficed: "It is her imaginative expression that draws our affinity to her world.... it's what draws us to understand and care."

Assistant Professor of Religion Rebecca Kneale Gould (a former student of Buell's) introduced Buell to the audience as a thinker and writer in environmental studies who bypasses "easy romanticism" about nature writing and engages the deeper and more difficult questions, a task she feels is crucial for environmental studies in the humanities. Such deeper concerns resonated throughout the evening, not only in Buell's talk, but in the thoughtful questions raised by students, faculty and community members in the audience. While the environmental challenges raised that evening remain serious ones for the future, we were all reminded that books do change lives, including our own.

*(Starting in 1998, the Environmental Affairs Lecture was named in memory of Scott Margolin, of the Middlebury College Class of 1999. In his one year here, Scott established himself as a dedicated student of Environmental Studies, a leader in Environmental Quality and other student affairs, and an outstanding writer.)*



*Amory Lovins, author, consultant and co-founder of Rocky Mountain Institute, spoke to a packed Dana Auditorium last fall. Highlighting key elements of his book Natural Capitalism, the lecture focused on the emergence of new business practices in the face of diminishing natural resources. He provided examples of leading-edge companies that are practicing a new type of industrialism that is more efficient and profitable while saving the environment and creating jobs. He also shared his concept of the Hypercar™ and predicted that cars of the next century will get 200 miles to the gallon without compromising safety and power. For more information about Amory's current research, visit his website at [www.rmi.org](http://www.rmi.org)*

## Expanded Position focuses on Campus Sustainability

Connie Leach Bisson was hired last June to expand sustainability initiatives across campus. In the course of a day, Leach Bisson criss-crosses campus many times, working with the Facilities Management staff on energy planning and Midd Dining on local food purchasing, shares information about campus environmental programs with peer institutions and alumni, meets with architects and Facilities Planning staff on green design elements, and supports students involved in environmental research or projects. "It's invigorating," is Connie's response after nine months on the job. "My day-to-day colleagues are a great mix of faculty, staff, and students who provide expertise and insight for me from their respective posts. The students, in particular, are a seemingly endless source of ideas, commentary, and energy." Leach Bisson is assisting the Environmental Council complete an emissions inventory using fuel consumption, waste generation, and transportation data from 1990–2000. The Council hopes to use this data to set clear goals for the College in significantly reducing and offsetting greenhouse gases emitted by the College.

Connie has degrees from Williams College and the University of Michigan. She has spent the last twenty years leading waste reduction initiatives at the local, state and national level. In 1987, Connie was honored by the National Recycling Coalition as National Recycler of the Year for her work in establishing the first household battery recycling program in the country. With two colleagues, Leach Bisson wrote a book published by the American Hospital Association to assist hospitals in establishing extensive recycling and waste reduction programs.

Amy Seif, who previously held the Environmental Coordinator position, is now the Communications and Information Manager for the Institute for Earth, Oceans and Space (EOS) in Durham, NH. Much of the research at the Institute, which is comprised of 200 faculty, staff and graduate students, involves different aspects of the global warming issue (some of the early ice core data was gathered by EOS researchers).

# The Roots of a S

Over thirty-seven years ago, five years before the first Earth Day, Middlebury College established what is believed to be the first undergraduate environmental studies major program in the country. The expansion of course offerings to include the environment in the mid-sixties planted seeds of environmental mindfulness that have grown to encompass the entire campus while branching well beyond into the community and region.

The Environmental Studies program was still young when President Olin C. Robison formed an Energy Council, chaired by then Vice President and Treasurer Dave Ginevan, to reduce energy use on campus. This simultaneous attention to the environment, originating independently from the academic and operation sides of the College, represented the beginning of a convergence in philosophy and commitment that continues to bear fruit on the campus today. Middlebury College's administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumni collectively contribute to a continuing tradition of environmental excellence that radiates throughout the institution and into the surrounding region. For over three and a half decades, various factors have come together to form a nexus where the cultural values in Vermont, the vision and innovation of College administration and staff, the ever-present energy of students to reshape and improve the world, and the scholarly work and dedication of faculty are intertwined within environmental education and sustainable practices.

As the Environmental Studies (ES) program developed during the seventies, the major averaged ten or fewer students. The main environmental focus on campus was energy conservation. During the early eighties the academic ES program grew slightly but graduating majors declined again in the latter half of the decade. On the wider campus front, student environmental activism was mobilized with the founding of Environmental Quality (EQ) in 1980. This decade also saw the peaking of the Energy Council's work, which included conservation measures, retrofitting and new technology that decreased energy use on campus. The Energy Council ultimately disbanded due to its success in establishing on-going energy conservation measures. In 1988, the College piloted Middlebury Outdoor Orientation (MOO), providing new students with a sense of place and a familiarity with the natural region surrounding the College prior to beginning their first semester. The program remains a highlight of the fall orientation program of first year students.

In the fall of 1988, the ES Senior Seminar, led by Professor Stephen Trombulak, developed a comprehensive solid waste management plan that was implemented by the College, complementing regional efforts in Vermont to establish waste reduction programs. This was a benchmark for environmental awareness at the College and in Vermont.

As we reflect back on these times from some future vantage point, a distinct and large growth ring will be evident for the environmental awareness and programs that amassed during the nineties. The ES major grew from 17 graduates in 1990 to 63 graduates in 1999 and the program expanded from fourteen faculty representing eight departments to forty-two faculty from seventeen departments. Recycling grew from a student-initiated activity to a waste reduction program of the College's Facilities Management operation, including recycling collection, an on-campus materials processing center, and a food composting program. The former Energy Council was resurrected as the Environmental Council, functioning as a standing committee reporting directly to the College President.

In the fall of 1994, President John McCardell furthered Middlebury's leadership by designating the environment as a Peak of Excellence and within the year hired Nan Jenks-Jay as the Director of Environmental Affairs, a high level position holding responsibility for college-wide academic and non-academic areas related to the environment.

1931  
Middlebury  
Outing  
Club

1965  
ES Program  
Established

1970  
First Earth  
Day in U.S

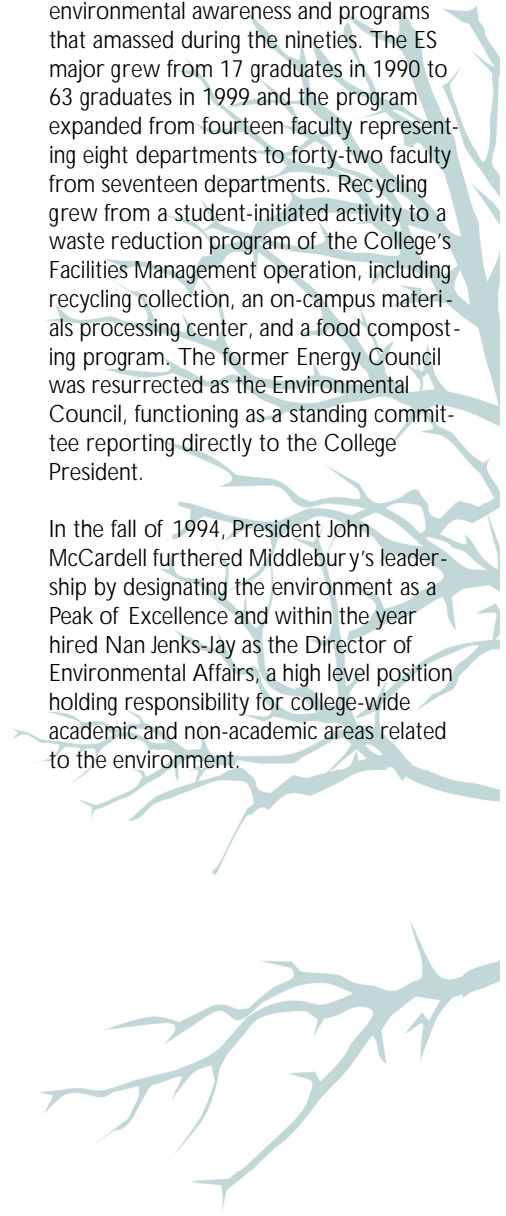
1977  
Energy  
Council

1980  
Environmental  
Quality

1988  
MOO  
Middlebury  
Outdoor  
Orientation

1989  
ES-401  
Presents  
Recycling  
Plan for  
College

1991  
Weybridge  
House





# t a i n a b l e C a m p u s

In the late nineties, as the College embarked on a ten-year expansion plan and, at the recommendation of the Environmental Council, the Trustees adopted a set of Guiding Principles, defining how the College and appointees would make decisions pertaining to the relationship of its built and natural environment for all future buildings and renovations.

*It is resolved that through the Framework, the College and its appointees shall consider: energy systems, life cycles, water use, scale and location, light pollution, recycling and waste management, materials, community product sources, community and regional impacts, transportation, aesthetics, indoor air quality, construction site management, viewsheds, open space and other issues related to the campus*

To support these Guiding Principles, a Project Review Committee was appointed, meeting regularly to evaluate the environmental goals of new campus development and renovations. Examples of these principles can be found in Bicentennial Hall, the College's new science building completed in 2000, which incorporated 125,000 board feet of green certified lumber harvested from the region, triple glazed windows, plastic lumber decking on the flat roof, and access to daylighting throughout, in addition to many other sustainable features ([www.middlebury.edu/~environment](http://www.middlebury.edu/~environment)).

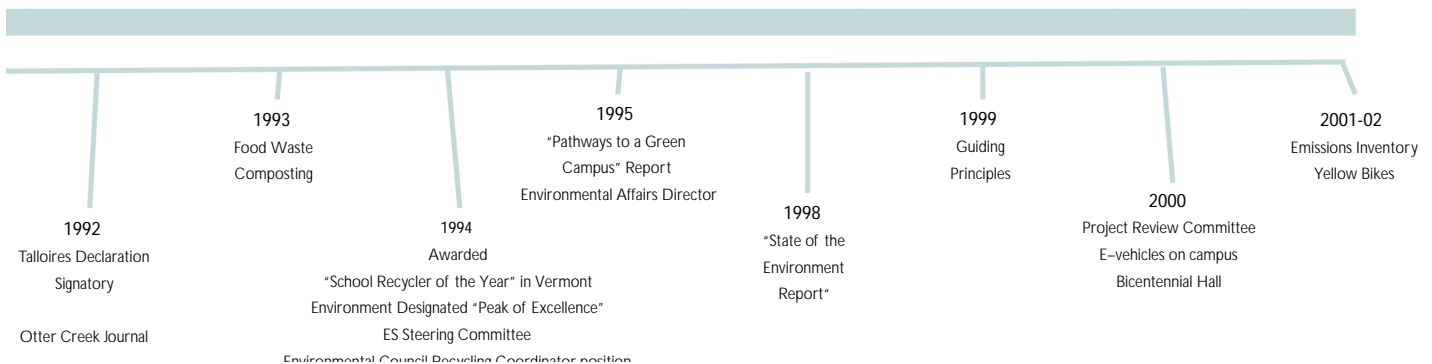
Further, the College is currently sustainably harvesting spruce, beech, and birch from lands owned at Bread Loaf that will be milled locally for use in LaForce Hall in Ross Commons and as exterior siding for the new Recycling Center. Purchasing officials recently met with Vermont furniture manufacturers in hopes of developing a contract for the production of tables, chairs, shelves, study carrels, bureaus, and bed frames made from locally harvested, green certified lumber for use in the new library and residence halls.

As we enter the 21st century, environmental affairs are a clear strength of this institution. The Environmental Council (EC), including five staff, three faculty, and seventeen students, is undertaking an emissions inventory that will assist it in recommending a set of goals to the Administration for achieving carbon neutrality. A new physics/environmental studies course, taught by Professor Rich Wolfson, on global warming complements the EC's initiatives and data are interchanged between the class and the EC. Forty-two students will graduate as ES majors in '02, thirty-four sophomores have declared ES their major and seven students have selected the new minor in ES. Environmental writer Bill McKibben is a visiting scholar in Environmental Studies (see sidebar p. 15). The Howard E. Woodin Colloquium series provides a stimulating environmental lecture on a weekly basis, regularly attended by more than one hundred faculty, staff, students, and local community members.

Around campus, construction of the new recycling center began in December as the final blocks of masonry from the deconstruction of the Old Science Center were ground up for use as fill in other projects. Through this deconstruction process, over 97% of the Old Science Center was salvaged for reuse or recycling. On the transportation front, Information Technology Services (ITS) delivers computers throughout campus in an electric truck. Yellow bikes are available for cross-campus commutes and the Student Government Association has organized shuttles to the airport during major breaks to minimize the need for personal vehicles on campus. A new student environmental group, Middlebury Initiative for Sustainable Development (MISD), is investigating sustainable agriculture initiatives and rallying students around a variety of environmental events.

The Environmental Coordinator position, formerly the Recycling Coordinator, has evolved to that of Sustainable Campus Coordinator, thereby dedicating essential staff time to furthering Middlebury's mission and commitment to integrating sustainability into the daily life of the institution. Snow is melted from walkways using an environmentally-friendly alternative to road salt that is made primarily from by-products (sugar cane waste) of the rum industry. We eat fresh greens grown in the greenhouse on campus using compost produced from campus generated food waste. And alumni share stories from across the world of their work and visions for environmental mindfulness.

These are some of the many roots growing in the fertile fields of sustainable practices tilled by Middlebury College.



ALUMNI IN ACTION :

Pam Chasek ~ Keeping the World Informed about Earth Negotiations



Whether summarizing a class lecture at Middlebury or synthesizing United Nations (UN) meetings, strong writing skills have been a pre-eminent tool of Pamela Chasek's career. Graduating from Middlebury in 1983 as a Political Science major, Pam considered law school but ultimately decided she was more interested in International Studies. After submitting her graduate school applications she traveled to Israel to work in a kibbutz north of Tel Aviv while awaiting word of her acceptance. In August of 1984, she began her master's work at the University of Miami. At times, she found her studies a bit misplaced, focusing on the Middle East in a program that predominantly concentrated its research on Latin America. After receiving her masters, Pam decided to head to DC, thinking it a likely gateway to international work.

While not specifically international work, Pam quickly landed a writing job with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), producing newsletter articles focusing primarily on domestic environmental policy with an occasional international piece. In 1987, influenced by the signing of the Montreal Protocol, Pam became interested in how governments negotiate treaties and returned to academia to pursue another masters and her PhD. Although the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University had no environmental program (later established after prodding by Pam and several peers), one of the professors, Dr. I. William Zartman, had strong expertise in negotiation and was beginning, himself, to link his work to environmental issues.

Pam continued to work part-time for NWF while balancing growing demands from her doctoral work as it gained substantial momentum when her advisor, Dr. Zartman, suggested that she might consider focusing her dissertation on the preparations for the upcoming Earth Summit, taking place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. Lacking funding to get to the first and second preparatory meetings for the Summit, Pam realized that in order to write about international negotiations, she had to be in those planning rooms. In August of 1991, Pam invested her fellowship funds in a plane ticket and made her way to Geneva for PrepCom 3, where she spent two weeks conducting "field research" in UN meeting rooms attending lengthy negotiating sessions.

It was there she met Kimo Goree, an American representative of a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Western Amazon of Brazil (and future spouse), who had been posting informal briefings of these negotiations on Econet, a forerunner to an e-mail listserve. After the first week of the Geneva meeting, Kimo suggested that they and a third colleague, Johannah Bernstein, develop a synopsis of what had happened during the first week to provide to NGOs arriving late to the meeting. They worked through the night producing the summary and made a few copies for distribution. Within hours, their summary was in hot demand and they spent their day running around Geneva looking for copiers that did not require a code. At the beginning of the third week, people sought them out, hoping for a summary of the second week. Not fully recognizing its worth, they had opted for hiking in the Alps over spending the weekend writing. Again they found themselves working through the night to synthesize the second week of negotiations.

Following the Geneva meeting, they were approached by World Resources Institute who offered to help them secure funding to produce a similar document for the fourth and final preparatory meeting in New York in March 1992. The newly created "Earth Summit Bulletin" became the daily "must read" and the unofficial report of the five-week preparatory session. Between the end of the session and Rio (a scant six weeks),

they raised \$60,000 to cover the cost of producing 10,000 copies of the Bulletin each day of the Earth Summit.

"With the Summit over, we thought we were done," recalls Pam. However, the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), a Canadian-based organization, recognized the good product and wanted it. They negotiated a deal with Pam, Kimo and Johannah and IISD became the publisher of the renamed "*Earth Negotiations Bulletin*." The Bulletin initially covered meetings that occurred in response to the Earth Summit, but they were soon asked to cover other UN related meetings. Currently, *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is a \$1.5M operation that employs approximately 25 freelance writers. With young children at home, Pam clocks less air miles these days and though she misses the direct connection with the negotiators, as the Bulletin's editor, she reviews and provides feedback on every daily report and edits every summary.

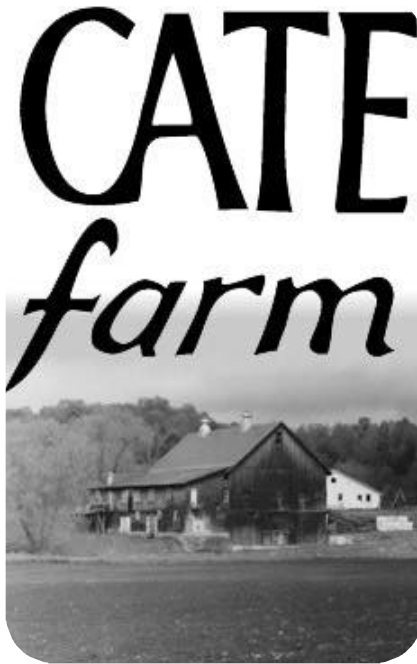
Living in New York City, Pam still has access to UN meetings in the US, but much of her time is now spent teaching. Since 1999, Pam has been a Visiting Assistant Professor and Director of International Studies at Manhattan College. She runs the College's Model UN Program, and is hoping to develop an Environmental Studies cluster of courses. She has published three books and numerous articles on international environmental policy. As the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg approaches, Pam is focusing her research on the status of Agenda 21 implementation at the international level since Rio.

Clearly for Pam, who claims she had "no clue" what she wanted to do when she graduated from Middlebury, her own advice to others certainly rewarded her well. "Never underestimate your ability to write. If you can write well, and can start networking early (through internships and other jobs) you can do most anything."



## ALUMNI IN ACTION

## Richard Wiswall ~ Deeply Rooted in Central Vermont



In the early '80s, a 176-acre tract of land in central Vermont became a hub of market garden farming for such a number of recent Middlebury grads that one might think the College had established a summer term on Cate Farm.

In 1981, Richard Wiswall '79, along with Steve Brock '81, Rich Tarlov '79, Chris Pratt '80, and Chris' dad Peter formed the Cate Farm Association and purchased a large tract of farmland in Plainfield from Goddard College, who was liquidating assets. Richard, who had always wanted to homestead, leased one acre from the Association to start a small market garden. While most of the fall and winter of the first year was spent renovating the farmhouse, in the spring, Richard used the existing solar greenhouse on the property to sprout his first garden crop. During that first year, other MiddKids living in the house included Geoff FitzGerald '81, Ellen Starr '81, Julie Ewing '80, Dave O'Keefe '81, and Phil Reynolds '80. During the summer additional help arrived from Leah Sirkin '80, Molly Stevens '80, Alisa Joyce '81, Jackie Price '81, Paula Routley '82, and Theo Miller '80. "It was trial and error in those first years," reminisced Richard. "None of us had any experience with growing crops to sell. "They tried a bit of everything—twelve to fifteen varieties of lettuce, seven varieties of

cabbages — and learned from other growers and conferences. "We were the huge variety, small scale operation back then," notes Richard. Gaining confidence, experience and success with each year, they expanded their farming plot on an annual basis, increasing from one to two to four and ultimately to twelve acres, at which point "we were a bit beyond what we could handle and decided to maintain at this level," notes Richard. In 1995, Richard obtained funding to purchase the entire property from Cate Farm Associates. By 1997, the gardens encompassed twenty-two acres and included six, one hundred foot greenhouses. No longer growing a bit of everything, Richard has learned what to grow for his buyers. From the beginning he established an organic operation and in 1984 assisted in launching an organic certification program initiated by Organic Farms Inc. of Maryland. In 1985, he helped establish the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) and became a charter member. Cate Farm has now diversified its crop selection to include both organic vegetables and medicinal herbs. "The medicinal herbs are nice because in addition to the enjoyment we get in growing them, we usually sell them all at once — one quarter acre in one invoice. Tom's of Maine buys our fresh Echinacea which we ship off to them once a year." A state of the art storage facility on the farm allows Cate Farm an extended season. "We store and sell our root crops right through May."

Richard and his wife, Sally Colman, manage the business during the winter months but

employ five full-time laborers from April–October. During key harvest weeks they may also hire some additional temporary help. They prefer to sell to local markets such as the area food co-operatives, local restaurants and the weekly farmers' market in Montpelier. Richard and Sally are also part of a system that sells fresh, organic produce on a regional level. In 1984, Cate Farm connected with 13 other small growers in Vermont to form the Deep Root Organic Co-op, enabling them to combine their resources and harvest to sell to urban markets in NYC, Philadelphia and Boston. "This co-op is great. We have lots of camaraderie and sharing rather than stiff competition. We plan out who is going to grow what crops, allowing us to focus our attention on growing quality products without having to worry throughout the year about the marketplace."

Were there experiences at Middlebury that influenced this career path? A few came quickly to mind for Richard who spent his junior year in Nepal doing agricultural research. Excited to start a college farm on his return, he remembers clearly that his idea was not enthusiastically embraced by staff in Facilities Management. Instead, he launched a small community garden project off Route 125 just west of campus, plowed fields at the home of Geography Professor Perry Hansen, and found further clarity in reading "The Unsettling of America" by Wendell Berry.

For additional information, see [www.catefarm.com](http://www.catefarm.com).



Richard Wiswall and staff

## 2001 – Awards, Internships, Independent Study Projects, and Theses – 2001

### 🌿 Awards 🌿

Kaitlin Gregg '03, was awarded the prestigious national Udall Scholarship in 2001. The Morris K. Udall Foundation scholarship is awarded annually to students majoring in a field related to the environment.

Approximately 75 students from across the United States are awarded the \$5,000 scholarship towards their college tuition.

Eve-Lyn Stirling Hinckley '01, was awarded the 2001 Scott Margolin '99 Environmental Studies Award. This award is given annually to the graduating senior whose work, in the judgment of the ES Steering Committee, best exemplifies the integrated study of the physical and human environments.

### 🌿 Internships 🌿

Brendan Bechtel , Paint Rock Canyon Enterprises  
 Brooke Hewes, Wild Earth Journal  
 Sarah Rosow, Green Corps  
 Benjamin Sprague , NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary  
 Susan Strife, Green Mountain Audubon Nature Center  
 Warren (Gus) Sinsheimer , Yestermorrow Design/Build School  
 Jennifer Marlow, San Juan Preservation Trust ( San Juan Islands, WA)  
 Matt Sommerville , Landscape Development Interventions (Fianarantsoa, Madagascar)  
 Susannah Cowden and Alana Sagin , Hood Canal Ranger District (Quilcene Area)  
 Susy King , Lakes Environmental Association (Bridgton, ME)

### 🌿 Independent Studies 🌿

Rita Vincello worked with the US Forest Service through the Middlebury Ranger Station on their Lynx Project—a project whose goals include collecting positive evidence for lynx in the Green Mountain

National Forest. Since the snowshoe hare is the main prey for lynx, Rita conducted a Management Indicator Species Report on the snowshoe hare. After surveying plots throughout the GMNF for signs of the hare such as scat, browse, and tracks, she created a map of the GMNF and where evidence of the hare was found.

Margaret (Molly) Witters did a creative non-fiction project, based on research and interviews, centered on three generations of prostitutes on the French-speaking island of Madagascar. She looked at the natural and governmental systems that both discourage and sustain prostitution, and produced, as well, a moving portrayal of one young prostitute's harrowing life choices.

Benjamin Jervey developed a film entitled "Lessons of Curitiba" after studying the progressive land use and development policies of this Brazilian city, Brooke Hewes studied the ecological, economical and political ramifications of wilderness in the Green Mountain National Forest, and Jessica Pasko investigated "Environment and Development in India: A Case Study of the Chipko Forest Preservation Movement." Lee Perlow worked on a project entitled "Applied GIS and Conservation of Federal Lands," and Abigail Ward developed a children's fiction book with an accurate conservation biology component.

Susanne Fogt looked at the recent history of organic agriculture in the United States and the values and ideas underlying the organic agriculture movement; the potential repercussions of federally regulated national organic standards; and the changing direction of the values of organic from its roots in a counterculture movement to a growing economic market.

Benjamin Calvi developed a collection of short stories entitled, "Stories of Home: a seasonal exploration of family and place," that illuminates how a connection to both family and place here in Vermont has led to the development of a social and environmental ethic. Susan Strife shadowed an environmental educator 3 days a week to help implement environmental education into their science curriculum.

Jeffrey Polubinski's investigation, "How Well Can Stakeholder-Based Laws Protect Local Mountain Ecologies? A Case Study of 'Green' Expansion in the Green Mountains" included working with Professor Jon Isham to write a chapter for the Vermont Law Review and an upcoming book looking into the law's protection of ecology at ski areas in Eastern North America. Michael Snow developed GIS applications for ecological reserve design and Parham Gardner completed a study entitled, "Compost Happens: The Solar-Compost Greenhouse Project," which focused on implementing the use of two naturally occurring energy sources to heat a greenhouse – solar energy and compost-generated heat – to allow greens and herbs to be grown year-round for use at dining halls on the Middlebury campus.

### 🌿 Senior Theses 🌿

Lourie Yelton's thesis, *The potential use of immunocontraception for the management of white-tailed deer and feral horses; variability in the immune response of vaccinated animals and effects of adjuvant type*, investigates one strategy that conservation biologists and wildlife managers use to deal with the issue of overpopulation of these two species.

Corey B. Bills' thesis *The Divine Sickness: Christianity and Exile Among the Karen* presents the cultural history of the Karen within the context of the social politics of Burma.

In his thesis, *Lessons of Curitiba, and other tales of urban ecological salvation*, Benjamin Jervey highlights a diversity of solutions to the many pressing issues of urban areas such as population growth and sprawl.

Research and data presented in Ariel Diggory's thesis, *The succession of woody vegetation in abandoned floodplain hay fields along Otter Creek in Addison County, Vermont*, makes a contribution to the field of floodplain forest restoration and can be utilized by entities such as The Nature Conservancy as they plan their restoration projects.





## 2001 ES 401 Projects

SPRING 2001—Nan Jenks-Jay

### The Wood Property: An Investigation of Land Use

This land-use investigation of a college-owned parcel along the western bank of Otter Creek included gathering data such as the attributes of the parcel, its history, current uses, potential future uses, and those with interests in the parcel. Because of the many unique attributes of this property, it has attracted attention both from developers and area Land Trust and Audubon groups. The information presented in this project has served and will continue to serve as a useful body of information in future decision making processes regarding the fate of this land. One current example of how this information is being utilized involves the Middlebury Area Land Trust's (MALT) interest in the Wood Property. As of November 2001, MALT had submitted a state grant to obtain funding to purchase the land from the College with the goals of developing a pedestrian and bike path, providing access to the wetlands on the site for educational purposes, and setting aside the area as common public land for residents and tourists. MALT should hear about funding for the project by March of 2002. No doubt the information gathered by the students and the awareness that was raised through their interactions with the community will be of great assistance to this proposal.

SPRING 2001—Professor Kathryn Morse

The second of the two Spring 2001 ES 401 sections investigated a diversity of topics focusing on “stuff,” humans’ attitudes about the natural versus the material worlds, and the origin of the things humans consume. Projects included a children’s picture book entitled “The Path of the Seed—The Story of Where Cotton Comes From;” a pamphlet entitled “Where Does Your Food Come From” which details Midd Dining’s commitment to supporting local farms and businesses through its local food purchasing; a investigation of the Vermont image in the piece “Misplaced and Displaced Matter: On the Topic of lawn Art in Vermont”; a cultural and land use history of Job’s Neck—a pre-European sandplain restoration project located in Martha’s Vineyard; a project which reflected on a Spring Break kayaking journey, detailing the consumption of “stuff” during the trip; a video project highlighting the material possessions of Middlebury students; and the development of a set of recommended, environmentally and socially acceptable, investment strategies for the College based upon companies’ patterns of consumption.

FALL 2001—Professor Rebecca Kneale Gould

### A Comprehensive Guide: Alternatives to Expansion — Growth and Demolition on the Middlebury College Campus

The demolition of Middlebury College’s old Science Center and plans to recycle 98% of the building materials were already underway when ES 401 commenced in the fall of 2001. Most of the students were unfamiliar with the activities of the site, and felt that their lack of awareness characterized the community at large. Their curiosity led them to investigate such questions as: How do you recycle a building? What was the decision making process behind this whole operation? Why was a thirty year-old building being torn down? What were the local opinions and perceptions of the project? Through conversations, resources on the web, and research of literary publications, the students sought the answers to these questions and produced a guide that details the planning process that determined the fate of the old Science Center, the development of the college’s environmental principles that guided the operation, and the emergence of the deconstruction and recycling “movement;” traces the products from the old Science Center to both local and global locations; and provides local perspectives from the town and college linked to growth and demolition on the Middlebury College campus. In addition to raising awareness, the information presented and the perspectives highlighted in this project can be utilized in the College’s larger efforts to publicize and promote this project.

### Spirit in Nature—A Handbook

The Spirit in Nature (SpIN) Paths in Ripton, VT—a series of interconnected forest paths with quotes representing various faith traditions and their relationship to the environment—were the focus of another group of ES 401 students in the fall of 2001. The purpose of the guide, developed by the students for the community at Middlebury College as well as for the wider community, is to encourage interaction and enjoyment of the natural world surrounding our Vermont home. The book is intended for both adults and young people, those who are a part of SpIN and those who have never thought of connections between nature and spirituality. It contains a wide range of resources, including a natural history of the SpIN lands, educational exercises, information about religious traditions and interviews with SpIN founders and path coordinators.



Student walking on the Wood property.



A list of past ES 401 projects is available on the *NEW ES 401 page* of the ES web site—<http://www.middlebury.edu/~es/es401.htm>. Links to some of the final research products are available through this site and hard copies of all projects can be obtained by contacting Diane Munroe, Environmental Teaching Associate, Middlebury College Environmental Studies Program, Farrell House, Middlebury, VT 05753; (802) 443-5925; [dmunroe@middlebury.edu](mailto:dmunroe@middlebury.edu).



## FA CULTY AND STAFF NEWS

Thomas Beyer (Russian) has developed an on-line Russian Ecology course geared for students studying Russian so that they can gain expertise in vocabulary and issues related to the environment.

John Elder (English/ES) returned to campus this summer after traveling through Italy during the 00-01 academic year on a Fulbright Fellowship. John was pursuing research into the career of George Perkins Marsh, the Vermont writer whose masterpiece Man and Nature was published in 1864 while he was serving as Lincoln's Ambassador to Italy. John's newest book, The Frog Run, has just been published by Milkweed Editions.

Rebecca Gould (Religion) attended a 5-week summer program on Environmental Ethics in Anchorage Alaska, funded through a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute Grant.

Jonathan Isham (Economics) offered an International Studies Colloquium in December, exploring the effects of a country's natural resource endowment and social institutions on its economic growth. In collaboration with Tom Kelly (Economics) and Sunder Ramaswamy (Economics), Jon is editing a book Social Capital and Development: Well-Being in Developing Countries that will be published by Edward Elgar Publications in April 2002.

Tom Kelly is currently a Fulbright Scholar at USIU in Nairobi studying environmental NGOs and poverty alleviation in Kenya. Last spring, Tom developed a new ES/IS course on Environment and Development to strengthen the link between International Studies and Environmental Studies.

Pat and Tom Manley (Geology) are involved in a collaborative project with a colleague from the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to provide information for assessing and addressing water quality concerns in Lake Champlain. Pat Manley is continuing her research on

Holocene climate change in Antarctica that included a two-month research cruise to East Antarctica in Feb-Mar 2001.

Chris McGrory Klyza (Political Science/ES) edited the book Wilderness Comes Home: Rewilding the Northeast, published this spring. The book includes chapters by John Elder, Steve Trombulak, and Chris, as well as an epilogue by Bill McKibben. The book is part of the Middlebury Bicentennial Series in Environmental Studies.

Krista Siringo (Career Services), in recognition of her work helping Middlebury students locate challenging environmental careers and actively serving on the College's Environmental Council, was nominated for the Environmental Career Center's Environmental Career Counselor of the Year in 2001.

Steve Trombulak (Biology/ES) edited So Great a Vision: the Conservation Writings of George Perkins Marsh, published in 2001 by the University Press of New England and part of the Middlebury Bicentennial Series in Environmental Studies. His article on "The ecological consequences of roads" was published by the Vermont Environmental Report in their July 2001 issue.

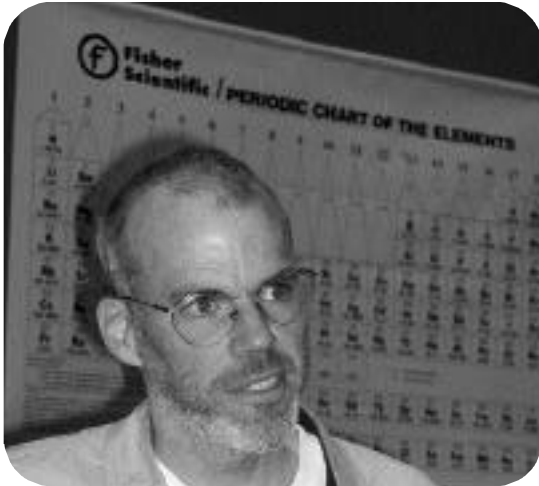
Rich Wolfson (Physics) gave his inaugural lecture "Like a Work of Shakespeare: Reality and Metaphor in Modern Physics," as the first Benjamin F. Wissler Professor of Physics in November. This appointment honors both Professor Wissler, a faculty member from 1930-1970, and Prof. Wolfson, who joined the faculty in 1976. Both men are described by their former students as passionate, committed teachers, who bring science alive and insist on top quality performance. Rich developed a new course entitled Global Climate Change that was offered in the Fall '01, offering a rigorous scientific introduction to the subject. Rich has also been collaborating with climatologist Steven Schneider on the introductory chapter of a new book on climate change policy.



In the spring of 2001, Professor Rich Wolfson (Physics) teamed up with student Katinka LoCasio '01 to study the energy generated in compost. The two received an Environmental Grant from the Environmental Council to set up an experimental compost pile adjacent to Bicentennial Hall and documented a temperature profile of the pile. Their results corroborated others, suggesting a sensible heat generation on the order of 200 watts per cubic meter of compost. Additional research is needed to determine how best to use Middlebury's compost for greenhouse heating. While Dining Services is currently testing recovery of heat from a heat exchanger buried in the active pile, there is a substantial portion of latent heat tied up as gaseous H<sub>2</sub>O. The most energy-efficient approach, conclude LoCasio and Wolfson, might be to place compost right inside the greenhouse. However, no optimum system has yet been found that can extract the energy, allow convenient removal of the finished compost, and protect tender plants from NH<sub>3</sub> buildup and other toxicity problems. Rich and Katinka presented their research at the New England regional meeting of the American Physical Society (APS) that was held on the Middlebury campus in March 2001. An abstract of their work was published in the Bulletin of the APS:

"Energy Generation in Compost" (abstract), K. LoCasio and R. Wolfson, *Bulletin of the American Physical Society*, 46, 31, 2001.

## Visiting Scholar in Environmental Studies ~ Bill McKibben



Bill McKibben

*Bill McKibben, author and environmentalist, is a Visiting Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury for the 2001–2002 academic year. McKibben embodies and practices the values he has written so passionately about over the years. He commutes to his office in Farrell House via bike. He generously shares his time—meeting with students for dinner, arranging a winter term internship, entertaining environmental visionaries speaking at the college, stimulating activism in key areas of interest to him such as global warming—all with a keen sense of enjoyment of and interest in those with whom he is with.*

In a recent *Middlebury Campus* article advocating the need for global cooperation in order to address some of the most pressing environmental issues, McKibben states:

Some of the changes need to be technological – we have to think of a much smarter way to provide energy for ourselves. But it's not enough. At some level it has to do with asking ourselves how much we need, what is it that we want out of life, what our real satisfactions are going to be. And these are questions that are economic, they're political, they're theological, they're psychological. It's one of the reasons why I'm really happy to be at a college like Middlebury. Here is something that really does demand the input of every different discipline on campus. It'll be the moment in which we find out whether higher education is hopelessly divided into specialties that just cannot really converse with each other or whether there remains enough coherence across disciplines to let interesting things happen. Middlebury's Environmental Studies program is the best undergraduate environmental studies program in the country, probably the world. And the reason is that no one has successfully knit together natural sciences and social sciences (like Middlebury has). Here they seem truly integral and the relationships between them are strong. It's a really good sign that those kinds of environmental principles that people are learning here are filtering down not only to the student body, but also out horizontally to the administration, to faculty, and to staff.

We take this praise with the humility and restraint that McKibben personifies and hope that our continued efforts to strengthen Middlebury's Environmental Studies Program keep us at the forefront of interdisciplinary environmental education.

Bill McKibben gently carries a long and distinguished list of accomplishments and awards. His first book, [The End of Nature](#), was the first account for a general audience of the practical and philosophical problems posed by global warming. It has been translated into 20 languages and was recently re-issued in a 10th anniversary edition. Two of his other books include [The Age of Missing Information](#) and [Hope, Human and Wild](#). A former staff writer for the *New Yorker*, his essays, reporting, and criticism appear regularly in publications such as the *Atlantic*, *Harpers*, the *New York Review of Books*, the *New York Times*, *Natural History*, *Outside* and many other national publications. He has received Guggenheim and Lyndhurst fellowships, and won the 2000 Lannan Prize in Nonfiction Writing. He holds several honorary doctorates, was honored with the Eco-Spirit award from the Spirit in Nature organization of Ripton, Vermont, and received a Bicentennial medal from Middlebury College in the fall of 2000. Bill spent last year in Boston, as a fellow of Harvard University's Center for the Study of Values in Public Life. We are excited that Bill, his wife Sue Halpern, also a distinguished author ([Four Wings and a Prayer](#)) and journalist, and their daughter are relocating to the Middlebury area. Amidst his active involvement in the Middlebury community, Bill is currently working on a new book about the meaning of human genetic engineering and other approaching technologies.



# ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

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