

Newsletter of the **Center for Sustainability and the Environment** at Wells College.



On Nov. 5, we offered a campus-community **Harvest Dinner**, a collaboration between the *Center for Sustainability* and pastor Barb Blom, Wells alumnus and pastor of *United Ministry Church* in Aurora. The Center provided the tableware, Hallmark provided a large pan of jambalaya, and other campus and local community members contributed delicious food items. It was a fun and tasty time for campus and community folks to get to know one another a little better. More than sixty members of the campus and local community attended this first-time event, especially 50 or so college students hungry for a "home-cooked" meal.

## 2022 Peachtown Peach Tree Planting Ceremony

On September 30, over 45 members of the campus community and traditional Cayuga Nation representatives and their allies were in attendance at the annual planting of the latest peach tree in our developing grove. **Dan Hill**, Heron Clan member and caretaker of the Cayuga SHARE Farm, opened the event by providing information about the Cayuga people who once lived in this, their former native territory. **President Jon Gibraltar** explained that Wells takes seriously that we are sited on indigenous land - our adoption of the land acknowledgment opening many meetings is part of our recognition of that history. Once the president learned about the sad history of the Clinton-Sullivan campaign to eradicate the indigenous settlements in this area - including destroying 1,500 peach trees - he thought that re-creating a peach grove on his lawn next to the lake would be a fitting commemoration of that tragedy and one small step toward reclaiming Cayuga heritage in this place. **Ernie Olson**, professor of Anthropology and Religion, supplied the peach tree to be planted and he prepared the hole in which it would be placed. Dan further explained that the women of the Cayuga tribe were responsible for planting and harvesting food, so those identifying as female in the audience were invited to come forward and participate in preparing the hole with compost, placing the tree, refilling the hole and watering the tree. **Anna Ialeggio**, assistant professor of Studio Art, explained that the three clay vessels they brought to the event were created by students in the Spring 2022 *FIELDS* class specifically to water the newest peach tree. Students in that class learned more about the history of the native village in Aurora and its destruction which was ordered by President George Washington following the Revolutionary War. Students harvested natural clay from a campus stream bank and used that material as "slip" to decorate their handmade earthenware vessels, which were pit fired near the boathouse. **Erma**, a Cayuga Heron Clan member who joined Dan Hill for this ceremony, mentioned how much she has always felt welcomed at Wells and how grateful she was for this annual commemoration. Dan also explained why those attending the event were invited to wear orange, to acknowledge the "Every Child Matters" initiative. This effort recognizes the more recent tragic history of native children being taken from their families to be adopted out to white families or housed in "white" schools where they were not allowed to practice their native language or learn about their people's culture. Many youth died in those institutions and many of those who survived are struggling to learn about their past lives and re-assimilate into tribal culture. Only recently has the scope of the tragedy become apparent. The *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*, which was observed on September 30, seeks to raise public awareness and urge official Canadian and US government acknowledgement of this painful chapter in North American relations with indigenous people.

### In this issue:

Faculty Accomplishments	2
New Sustainability Courses	2
Summer Garden Research Project	2
Interactive EcoArt Activity	2
Reusable Beverage Container	3
New Water Bottle Fill Stations	3
Solar Walkway Lighting	3
EPA Green Power Partner	3
ESA Project Year3 Results	3
Dining Sustainability	3
Print Relief Report	3
Trick or Trash Collection	3
Fall Sustainability Outreach Activities	4



## ...and then there was that day the Circus came to town...

In September, the *Center for Sustainability*, the Visual Arts Program, and the *Arts & Lecture* series collaborated to host *Bread+Puppet*, one of the oldest, nonprofit, political theatre companies in the US. The Fall 2022 *Bread+Puppet* (B+P) troupe hit the road on a 3-1/2 month tour with *The Apocalypse Defiance Circus*. The show, says founder and director Peter Schumann, is "in response to our totally unresurrected capitalist situation, not only the hundreds of thousands of unnecessarily sacrificed pandemic victims but our culture's unwillingness to recognize Mother Earth's revolt against our civilization. Since we earthlings do not live up to our earthling obligations, we need resurrection circuses to yell against our own stupidity." Over 300 campus and larger community folks gathered on the boathouse lawn for this early evening, outdoor show of skits with topical political themes, music, dance, and use of various puppets. Afterward, cast members served the troupe's famous sourdough rye bread with aioli (hence "bread" in the name) and sold posters and postcards produced by the *Bread+Puppet Press*. The College made arrangements for the B+P troupe to stay overnight at *Camp Caspar Gregory*, a local community camp.



## Faculty Accomplishments



Professor of Biology and Environmental Science **Jaclyn Schurr** presented a poster at the meeting of the *Ecological Society of America*. Her presentation was titled “The impacts of a perennial, summer growing invasive species, pale swallow-wort on spring ephemeral populations,” detailing the findings of a multi-year research study in partnership with the *USDA Agricultural Research Service*.

**Jen Myers**, visiting assistant professor of Sustainability, presented at the annual meeting of the *North American Association for Ecological Educators* conference in October. Her presentation was titled “Strategies for Teaching Sustainability and Social Justice Courses Online”.



**Marian Brown**, Center for Sustainability director, was invited to team with Evan Tuthill, planner for Cayuga County Department of Planning, to develop a pilot food waste diversion program for the county. This effort is guided by the *Syracuse University Center for Sustainable Community Solutions* and the *NYS Pollution Prevention Institute*, under the auspices of a Solid Waste Management Grant from the *US Department of Agriculture (USDA)*. USDA’s goal is to assist leaders of NYS communities, especially those from rural regions, to develop plans for local projects to address food loss and waste through sustainable management strategies. Cayuga County was identified as a target rural county, and Wells College was invited to participate because of our long-standing dining hall food waste diversion program.

## New Sustainability Courses

The following courses were approved by the Faculty for delivery in the period as noted:

**OCS 205/BUS 205/SUS 205 Exploring Business and Sustainability in Costa Rica** June 2023  
This off-campus study course involves 3 weeks of experiential and immersive learning about how businesses, non-profits, and governmental organizations value and implement environmental, social, and economic sustainability practices in Costa Rica. Topics may include social entrepreneurship, ecological diversity and conservation policy, resource management, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and land management practices, and the impacts of tourism. Field trips may include visits to national parks, ecological preserves, green energy facilities, and tours of Indigenous and other locally-owned businesses and artisans. Students will also participate in a short homestay with a local family. This experience is a partnership with Universidad Veritas in San Jose, Costa Rica. Course work will be in English. Spanish is not required but encouraged. 3 credits

**OCS 285 Sustainable Living—Wells College Alternative Spring Break** March 11-18, 2023  
Learn to live more sustainably this Spring Break! Travel to the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains for a week of hands-on learning managing an organic garden, cooking local food with a professional chef, and designing and building sustainable infrastructure. Develop sustainable living skills and explore ways to integrate sustainability into your major, community, and career. This course is co-facilitated by Wells College faculty and educators at *Tenderfoot Learning Lab*, a non-profit sustainability education center in southeastern Ohio. Application and \$150 program fee required. 1 credit

**ENVR 385 Invasive Species Ecology** Spring semester 2023 Instructor: Marjolein Schat  
An introduction to the ecology of invasive species and common management practices. We will cover what life history characteristics allow plant and animal species to become invasive as well as the characteristics of an ecosystem that might make it susceptible to invasion. We will also study invasive species of local significance. 3 credits

**SUS 214 Power, Privilege, and the Environment** Spring semester 2023 Instructor: Jen Myers  
This course offers an in-depth introduction to the social dimension of sustainability. Students will examine the ways systemic inequalities in the U.S. impact access to resources, participation in outdoor recreation, and protections from environmental harms. We will explore the historical roots of mainstream U.S. environmentalism and analyze contemporary case studies illustrating the ways sustainability challenges disproportionately impact members of minoritized communities. 3 credits

## Summer Garden Research Presentation

On November 17, several members of the summer 2022 Garden Research team presented the results of their project. **Dr. Ernest Olson**, professor Anthropology and Religion was joined by **Alanna Reidler** '23, theatre major with anthropology and dance minors, and **BrierMae Ossont** '23, Creative Writing major. The goals of this ongoing local gardening research project, first undertaken in summer 2021 with different students, were to observe how and what local residents are growing, learn about gardening culture in this Southern Cayuga area, and examine the effects of climate change on local gardening. This summer, over a dozen local gardeners were interviewed in their gardens and their kitchens. The students developed qualitative research skills from conducting videotaped semi-structured interviews, with additional imagery captured through still photography. The interviewed gardeners were identified from their use of the 2022 *Seed Exchange*, a project of the *Center for Sustainability*. Other research team members who participated but were not available to present were **Dr. Jen Myers**, visiting assistant professor of Sustainability, **Dr. Laura McClusky**, professor of Sociology & Anthropology who is on sabbatical this Fall, and **Benjamin McMonagle**, business major who graduated in May but stayed on to participate in the summer research project.



## Interactive EcoArt Activity

On November 10, the faculty of the Visual Arts and Art History programs brought Linda Weintraub to the Faculty Parlors for an immersive eco-art experience. Weintraub, author of “To Life—EcoArt in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet” spoke about her artistic and educational endeavors using items found in nature. Weintraub provided several dozen boxes, each containing a different interactive learning activity utilizing natural materials like bark, feathers, animal bones, stones, antlers, shells, moss, and other “found” materials. Participants worked through the activity boxes silently, absorbing the lesson contained within each, and when done, passed on that box to another learner before opening a new container. Fascinating!



Wellspring

**Reusable Beverage Container**

This fall, the Center for Sustainability again collaborated with the Student Affairs group to distribute a reusable beverage container to all new students during August move-in. A stock of mugs were also given to the Human Resources office staff to hand out to new employees during their on-boarding. This BPA-free plastic container is partially made with wheat straw, to reduce the amount of fossil-fuel based plastics used.



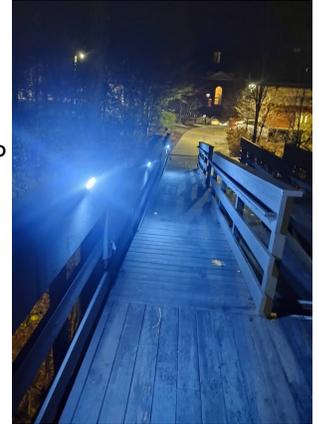
**New Water Bottle Fill Stations**

Campus plumber **Randy Bench** notified us that he installed new *Elkay EZH<sub>2</sub>O* hands-free water bottle fill stations in both Dodge and Weld residence halls in November, achieving the goal to provide a fill station in each residence hall. These two new units bring us up to 16 fill stations conveniently located in buildings across campus all dispensing pure, chilled, filtered drinking water.



**Solar Walkway Lighting**

**Ryan Steinberg**, associate dean for Student Conduct and Residential Life, alerted us to the recent installation of a significant number of solar powered walkway lights across campus—many of them motion sensing—to help eliminate “dark spots” and improve visibility and pedestrian safety on our roadways and sidewalks. (photo of Long Library bridge)



**EPA Green Power Partner**

Wells partners with this EPA program to report our purchase of renewable (so-called “green”) electricity. From our calendar year 2021 report, we joined 125 higher education institutions purchasing some proportion of their electricity from renewable sources. The total impact of these institutions making this commitment equals close to 5 million megawatts of “green” power purchased. One MW of electricity is enough to power 35,000 homes in the Northeast. Among the 14 NY partner schools, Wells was among only six schools purchasing 100% of our electricity from renewable sources, in our case, from wind farms.



**ESA Project Year 3 results**

Our partner for a recent *Energy-as-a-Service* (ESA) project, *Metrus Energy*, provided us with a third-year performance report. In 2018, Metrus and Wells entered into a unique financial arrangement under which a number of energy-saving measures were undertaken, including LED lighting upgrades, repair and replacements of over 100 steam traps, building envelope improvements, science fume hood ventilation control mechanisms, and installation of Building Automation Systems in several buildings. Those upgrades were substantially complete by the start of the academic year in 2019. Under the terms of this 14-year agreement, *Metrus* maintains ownership of the upgraded equipment/systems, and the college repays *Metrus* for its \$2.15M investment through the guaranteed annual savings in utility costs (electricity and propane). In Year 3, the Wells College ESA savings were 101.2% of the as-built expected savings, providing \$246,372 of total savings. This is comprised of \$184,332 of realized energy savings and \$62,040 of operational savings. Metrus’ “measurement and verification” partner, Trane Inc., calculated that in year three, the measures helped Wells realize 695 kilo-watt-hour savings and 33,265 savings in therms (standard measure of building heating). These utility energy savings equate to reducing emissions by 667 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.



**Dining Sustainability**



The Center for Sustainability continues to collect and analyze data to reassess our overall sustainability progress using the *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System* (STARS) offered by the *Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education* (AASHE). Among the data collected earlier this Fall were the food purchases for September 2021 and April 2022 made by Hallmark Dining and the GRIND Café. What we assessed was the degree to which each operation prioritized purchase of “sustainable foods”, defined as those that have third-party certifications (like *Fair Trade* or *USDA Organic*) or those food items that are plant-based. We were pleased to discover that over 30% of the foods purchased by these two food operations meet those criteria for foods that are sustainably produced or plant-based.

**Print Releaf Report**

*Print Releaf*, the reforestation partner for Toshiba, our print management service provider, reported that, based upon our campus print volume using networked printers for the annual October '21-22 period during which we printed 69,444 pages, 8 trees were supplied to our selected reforestation project run by *Trees, Water & People*. Located on the Ogalala Lakota reservation in South Dakota, this tree-planting program restores fire degraded landscapes, stores atmospheric carbon, and improves the skills and livelihoods of the local Lakota youth who primarily plant the donated ponderosa pine trees. Since we signed on with this program in July 2017, 177 trees have been re-planted on our behalf.



**Trick or Trash Collection**

This year, the Center for Sustainability collaborated with *Rubicon* to provide a special *Trick or Trash* collection box. In the U.S. alone, more than 600 million pounds of candy are purchased each year for Halloween. The vast majority of candy wrappers end up in landfills due to the inability of most curbside recycling programs to recycle them. Candy wrappers collected in the *Trick or Trash* box are returned for special recycling. The *Trick or Trash* box is provided free of charge to schools and the return of the box—so the contents can be recycled - is postage-paid, making this a great collaboration! The Center also provided special organic candies for the campus *Trick or Treat* activity that Peachtown School and our Wells students participate in.





Center for Sustainability and the Environment

Marian Brown, Director  
 Wells College  
 170 Main Street  
 Office: 213 Zabriskie Hall  
 Aurora NY 13026  
 Phone: 315-364-3304  
 E-mail: mbrown@wells.edu or sustainability@wells.edu

We're on the Web:  
[www.wells.edu/sustainability](http://www.wells.edu/sustainability)

Like Wells Center for Sustainability and the Environment  
 @Wells Sust Center

The Center for Sustainability donated two of what we affectionally call Green Goodie Baskets to non-profit organizations to support their Fall fundraising activities. These baskets are filled with assorted sustainable cleaning and personal care products that can be purchased in area stores. The basket for the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce annual virtual auction was valued at \$60. The larger basket, donated to the Book Lover's Ball on-site auction which supports the Aurora Library, was valued at \$115.



Marian Brown, Center for Sustainability director, was interviewed at length for a research project being undertaken by Elon University Environmental & Sustainability Studies major Caroline DiGrande '23, who is studying the impact of COVID on campus waste management programs.

**Sustainability** is a decision-making framework for continuous improvement that mindfully takes into account the social, environmental, and economic impacts of our choices.

Fall Sustainability Outreach Activities



On Friday, October 28th, Wells joined nearly 20 other New York colleges and universities participating in the *Campus Crunch*, an annual event commemorating *World Food Day*, encouraging everyone to consume more healthy, local, fresh fruits and vegetables. During that day's lunch period, *Hallmark Dining* provided an attractive and delicious spread of homemade apple crisp, cold and hot cider, and an assortment of hand apples, all procured from local orchards.



Wells' Center for Sustainability collaborated with the Community Education program at Cayuga Community College to host a Sustainability Dinner focused on cooking with soy products. This event was held at Cayuga's Culinary Institute in downtown Auburn, a state-of-the-art training faculty which provides hands-on learning opportunities for their Culinary Arts students. The facility also features

**SUSTAINABILITY DINNER: ITHACA SOY**  
 Enjoy an evening learning about Ithaca Soy from owner Adam Potenza as he discusses their business, mission, and process for making tofu. Chef Luke Szabo from *Scratch Farmhouse Catering* will make an amazing tofu-based dinner with recipes and cooking tips you can use at home.  
 October 27, 2022

full media capability to televise on-site cooking demonstrations and educational presentations. Wells reserved seats at the dinner and provided transportation for Wells faculty and students to the event. For this special event, Adam Provenza,

founder and CEO of *Ithaca Soy* (third from right in photo), explained where and how their organic soybeans are grown and how they produce their handcrafted tofu. Chef Luke Szabo from *Scratch Farmhouse Catering* (second from right), shared menus and demonstrated how to prepare various dishes using tofu, each of which were served to the diners. The presentation was also offered virtually via Zoom.



**Anthony Mandela**, director of Global Education, announced a major revision of Wells' study abroad programs. He developed some new academic opportunities (like the summer sustainable business course in Costa Rica—see more page 2), dropped some former destinations and established new, more cost-effective partnerships with programs like *University Student Abroad Consortium* and *International Student Exchange Program*. The Study Abroad website now provides guidance to help faculty and students identify global sites that offer courses in specific majors. Based upon these changes, the Center for Sustainability updated its informational board that highlights the global destinations that support Sustainability learning. Since every Admissions tour passes by this board, tour guides often refer to it to explain study abroad opportunities to prospective students so we also offer general study abroad information.

The Center for Sustainability supported the executive director of the *Cayuga Lake Watershed Network* (CLWN), Liz Kreitinger, and her board by providing access to the Zabriskie Hall Business Trading Room to conduct several in-person interviews with candidates for the organization's new Program Assistant. CLWN wanted to use a space with videoconferencing capability so some on their board could participate in the interviews virtually while other interviewers met in person with candidates.