

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



“One important issue you will continue to face is that of climate change. As the planet continues to warm, the glaciers continue to melt into the oceans, and weather patterns become more extreme, new technologies will evolve that will continue to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Electric cars — solar power and other forms of power as yet unknown will define our future. ... Rapid change is on the horizon in the way we live our lives and in the impact we all have on the environment.”
~ excerpted from **President Jonathan Gibraltar’s 2022** Commencement remarks

A Successful End of the Academic Year

The 2021-22 academic year came to a close with an in-person Commencement ceremony—our first in two years during the pandemic. It was exciting to get to celebrate this milestone achievement with our graduates and their families in attendance. We were so delighted that the person selected to serve as this year’s Commencement speaker was **Deb Callahan ‘85**, CEO of the *National Fenestration Rating Council* (NFRC), a non-profit organization which provides objective evaluations of the energy-efficiency performance of different doors, windows and skylights. Under Deb’s strong and capable leadership, NFRC has provided financial underwriting support for the *Center for Sustainability’s Sustainability Speaker series*. The last presenter in that series was Nance Klehm, founder of *Social Ecologies*, who came to campus to speak in December 2021. Deb provided the following sage advice, excerpted from her Commencement address: *Never has there been a time when being human is fraught with as many challenges as we have today. Our attention is fractured as we are bombarded with political, economic, social, racial, environmental issues . . . It takes a lot to process this while trying to work on ourselves. We are taught that to manage and develop our whole being requires us to dig deep and come out strong. To do this during challenging times takes courage, resolve, self-awareness, and desire. You ALL have successfully passed Adaptability & Resilience 101, thanks to the critical skills learned at Wells. This augurs well for each of you in the world of work where adaptability and resilience are qualities sought after at all levels within any organization. It is the stuff of which leaders are made. Countless studies have shown that the true grit of a leader is not how they perform during the good times but how they display emotional strength, courage, and professionalism during the most trying times. This is something I hope you will recognize as well as aspire to as you work your way up the proverbial career ladder. Endeavor to find work that you love ...work that is worthy of your time and energy and aligned with your values, not someone else’s. And once you do, I challenge you to be a student of what you love. Never stop learning, and never stop giving the absolute best of yourself to what you love doing. Figure out your values. Doing so requires you to spend time with you. Please make the time for quiet moments to reflect, reconcile, and respond to all life throws your way. Please know that defining your values is not negotiable or optional. Establishing values will help you prioritize your needs, set direction, and block out the noise that often clouds our thinking. So, rise, class of 2022. Like never before, the world needs you, your energy, passion, and spirit.*



We bid a fond farewell to these four Sustainability program graduates who are “rising up”:

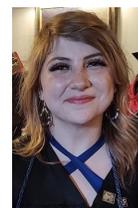
Brittany Anderson, Environmental Science major, Sustainability minor. Brittany finished her studies at the end of the Fall semester, but returned to campus to graduate with her class.



Nicole D’Aurizio, Environmental Science major, Sustainability minor. Nicole was on the Wells swim team, and she served as the president of *Wells Campus Greens*, the sustainability-focused student organization that won this year’s Student Affairs award for Campus Volunteerism during the Honors Award ceremony in early May. Nicole, who graduated *magna cum laude*, was awarded the *Cayuga Watershed Prize in Environmental Science* for her outstanding academic performance in her major; Nicole also earned *Distinction in Environmental Science* for her very high GPA in her major field of study.



Abigail Frey (*degree expected*), Political Science major, Sustainability minor. Abby plans to finish up her degree by completing a summer Sustainability internship at the *Ithaca Generator*, a community of inventors, crafters, designers, engineers and artists, many of whom work with sustainable materials.



James Stover III, Sustainability major, with minors in Anthropology and Environmental Science. Jimmy was awarded the Sustainability prize for his excellent work in his major field of study. Jimmy was active on the Men’s Soccer team and a valued, long-time student worker on the campus Grounds crew. Jimmy’s Fall 2021 Sustainability thesis was related to his participation in the summer 2021 faculty-student Garden research team. Jimmy further explored the cultural aspects of gardening as related to team members during their videotaped interviews with local gardeners and growers participating in the project. Jimmy also served as a Teaching Assistant for the January intersession trip to Hawaii (*see more on pg 2*).

In this issue:

Sustainability Center Accomplishments	2
Student Sustainability Presentations	2
Sustainability Academic Collaborations	2
Could you EPEAT that?	3
Green Power Partnership	3
Senior Class Recycling Drive	3
Water Bottle Fill Station Tally	3
Seed Exchange Final Stats	3
Carbon Offsets Purchased	3
Trash2Treasure Move-Out Collection	3
Wells Sustainable Swag	3
Sustainability Outreach Activities	4
BYOB Sustainability Prize	4

Sustainability Center Accomplishments

Center for Sustainability and the Environment director **Marian Brown** virtually co-presented a lightning round talk titled "Canceling Carbon: A Path to Campus Emissions Reduction" with John Jackson from *Metrus Energy* for the Second Nature Climate Summit. The duo presented on April 6th.

Center director Brown was interviewed by *Danielle Benjamin*, who was researching content for an article for the *Cayuga County Visitor's Bureau (CCVB)* on sustainability practices in hospitality and tourism. Some of Brown's insights were included in an April 13th post on CCVB's web blog titled "Thanks to Environmental Activists, Cayuga County Has a Bright Future".

Elisoa Andrian, STEM director and Science teacher at Union Springs Academy (USA), a private 7th Day Adventist Christian school, invited Center director Brown to participate as the sustainability guest speaker at their Science Fair on March 13th. The school's S.T.E.A.M (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) event featured student demonstrations and research poster presentations on the theme of "renewable energy". Dr. Andrian requested that Brown focus her remarks on advising USA students on "Lightening Your Ecological Footprint".



Ashpreet Kaur, a Ph.D. student of Interdisciplinary Ecology at the University of Florida recruited director Brown to participate in a research project on best campus zero waste strategies based upon her long expertise in higher education materials recovery and waste minimization strategies, like *Trash2Treasure*.

Student Sustainability Presentations

The end of the spring semester is always a busy time for students to present their thesis projects and show off what they learned during January or Spring semester internships. Below are a few of the student presentations that we attended in late April and early May.

Environmental Science seniors publicly presented their academic major theses during the final two sessions of the *Science Colloquium* series. **Nicole D'Aurizio**, ENVS major and Sustainability minor, presented her thesis titled "Light Pollution on the Wells College Campus", detailing her research on night-time light levels at four areas on campus. She kept meticulous records and researched the negative impacts of overlighting on various



bird, animal and insect species. She offered recommendations for "dark sky" solutions to address those problems. **Feleesha Jones**, ENVS and Sustainability double major, presented her ENVS thesis, titled "Mangrove forest degradation due to Human Impacts and the consequences Coastal Cities Face". Feleesha explained that mangrove forests help many coastal cities withstand tsunamis and that some of the reasons why mangrove forests are being destroyed are coastal tourism development and deforestation to support palm oil production and shrimp aquaculture. Feleesha plans to further explore these complex problems with her Fall 2022 Sustainability thesis project, looking more



closely at the economic, social and environmental impacts of shrimp fisheries. Also presenting Environmental Science theses were **Luke Eitner**, who explained the "Aftermath of Dam Removals", and **Evan Ecker**, who studied problems with ecosystem webs around "Sea Otters: a declining keystone species".

During the *Spring Internship Fair*, we noted these interesting poster presentations about students' work: Sustainability major **Jimmy Stover '22** explained the focus of his internship as a Teaching Assistant for Professor **Ernie Olson** during the January intersession class, *OCS 300 Anthropological Experience in Hawaii*. Jimmy's areas of focus included learning about native culture, traditions, and history, and observing sustainable practices by the Native Hawaiians with whom the class met, especially with regard to their gardening practices. Visual Arts major **Ellie Beavers '22**, who also went on that J-term



Hawaii trip, was much more intrigued with the petroglyphs the class visited.

Biology major **Conall Mathis '22** had a "high old time" learning about medical cannabis production and harvesting in his internship with an Oklahoma grower, producer and dispensary. And speaking of growing, Sustainability and Environmental Science double major **Liliana Talbot Gould '23** detailed some of the statistics from her



service as the *Wells College Seed Exchange* intern. Lili did the reach-out to over 75 companies to request seed donations, organized the inventory and handled the virtual seed exchange requests and order fulfillment process. Lili's internship spanned from late Fall 2021 through April 2022. And last but certainly not least, Sustainability major **Hannah Kulla '23** explained some of her activities as *Sustainable Materials Management* intern, working with Center director **Marian Brown** as site supervisor.



Sustainability Academic Collaborations

The *Center for Sustainability* collaborated with professor *Petko Kitanov*, coordinator of *Science Colloquium*, to host one of the presentations in that series. **Colin Evans '12**, Ph.D. candidate in the *Emergent Climate Risk Lab* at Cornell, presented "Insights into future drought risk in the Northeast United States" on February 25th. Colin spoke about the climate modeling that suggests a murky picture for the future of this region's hydroclimate. Colin also served as an adjunct lecturer, teaching "The Climate System" for the Environmental Science program.



The *Center for Sustainability* again collaborated with Dr. **Jackie Schnurr** and Dr. **Tom Jensen**, who co-taught *BIOL 109L Systems Biology: Biology of Organisms*. For one lab, student teams were directed to create a cell model using "found materials" (items that no longer serve a useful purpose) and/or incorporating natural materials. Each so-called *Sustain-a-Cell* model must include a key that identifies each organelle, the material used to represent that organelle, and where that material was found.



The Center director offers cash prizes for the best entries. The Grand Prize-winning team included **Justine Simms** and **Makayla Zapanta**. We commended this team for their plant cell model with its well-engineered cardboard cell wall, the suction cup for the nucleolus inside the metal cup with yogurt cup liner for the nucleus. We especially liked the clever use of plastic case fragments filled with empty sewing machine bobbins wound with green thread to represent chloroplasts.

Could you EPEAT that?



In compiling data for our Sustainability, Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) comprehensive evaluation of campus sustainability, **Dan Wentworth**, director of Information Technology, notified us that 100% of the 200 HP desktop PCs and 50 notebook computers the college purchased or leased in 2021-22 were EPEAT Gold certified. *Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)* is a globally recognized ecolabel for the IT sector. EPEAT is based on an objective set of environmental performance criteria that cover the full product lifecycle – including eco-design, production, energy use and recycling. Gold is the highest EPEAT certification level. *SCORE!*

Green Power Partnership

Wells again collaborated with the Environmental Protection Agency as a *Green Power Partner*. We reported our calendar year 2021 purchase of 3,450,380 kWh of 100% “green” electricity. Starting in 2018, Facilities director **Brian Brown** contracted for the supply of 100% wind-generated electricity. Our purchase of only electricity with verified “renewable energy credits” (RECs) helps increase demand for and generation of renewable electricity. Wells joined other higher ed partners that together purchased nearly 85 MILLION kilowatt hours of such “green” electricity, helping drive change within the power sector.



Senior Class Recycling Drive

Senior Class president **Anthony Westmiller '22** organized a redeemable bottle and can collection drive. Special collection boxes were placed in residence halls and the seniors collected container donations through the end of the spring semester to take to an area bottle redemption center. The proceeds of this bottle and can drive helped fund Senior Week activities. Anthony reported that the seniors redeemed \$400 worth of bottles and cans— totaling around 8,000 containers. *Well done, seniors!*



Water Bottle Fill Station Tally

We now have 14 Elkay EZH₂O water bottle fill stations installed in convenient areas on campus. These combination drinking fountain and bottle fill dispenser units feature an LCD counter that tracks how many times reusable beverage containers have been filled at each station. The assumption is that that many single-use disposable water bottles have been avoided.



We went around at the end of the semester and collected the “fill counts” from each of our fill stations and were very surprised and pleased to learn that to date, these units have avoided the disposal of nearly **200,000** water bottles.

Seed Exchange Final Stats

At the close of our 2022 Wells College Seed Exchange season, which ran from February 1st through the end of March, we had dispensed over 7,300 packets of seed, donated by 12 seed companies. We tracked the various kinds of recipients to whom we supplied free seed: 115 home gardeners, 8 commercial growers, 10 food pantry organizers, 14 community garden organizers, 4 community beautification programs, 15 educational programs (FFA, school gardens), 8 youth programs (4H, Girl Scouts), 6 senior citizen programs, 9 “other” programs including seed giveaways for organizational events, like the *Mission Zero* event (see pg 4).



Carbon Offsets Purchased

The *Center for Sustainability* calculated that 33 tons of CO₂ were emitted from the air travel for the *Anthropological Experience in Hawaii* class. The Center purchased that amount of carbon offsets from *Climate Vault*, which provides verifiable offsets through the purchase and “vaulting” of CO₂ allowances, so major emitters like utilities and power plants are prevented from using them to continue to release CO₂ emissions. *Climate Vault* also invests in technologies to remove atmospheric carbon dioxide.



Trash2Treasure Move-out Collection

Nearly 900 pounds of mostly reusable items were collected in the residence hall common areas during the waning weeks of the semester. Facilities transported collected items to the Zabriskie Hall greenhouse entrance for the *Center for Sustainability* director to weigh, sort and evaluate for further campus reuse. 10 boxes and bags of non-perishable foodstuff were diverted to restock the campus *Food Pantry*. We diverted 3 carloads of mostly clothing, footwear, bedding, linens and towels and other miscellanea to area reuse outlets. We kept back some reusable school and office supplies to resupply the *RUMPUS Room* in Macmillan Hall. We held onto a goodly assortment of room furnishings (especially bed risers!), housewares, appliances, costumes, decorations, and arts & craft items to redirect back to the free *Bargain Basement*. There is a plan in the works to relocate this reuse area from the basement of Main building because security upgrades last Fall to prevent unauthorized access to Main’s residential floors meant that no one except Main residents could access our reuse area. After Reunion 2022, we hope to co-locate the *Bargain Basement* (and maybe *RUMPUS Room*, too?) with the campus *Food Pantry* in a shared space on the 1st floor of Main Building that will remain open and accessible on a 24/7 basis.



Wells Sustainable Swag

Director of Alumnae & Alumni Engagement **Una Money Penny** shared with us one of these nifty reusable stainless steel water bottles that will be distributed to Reunion attendees this summer. We snapped this photo of **Dmitry Liapitch '10** with that Reunion beverage container along with some other Wells swag he picked up at the Bookstore during a recent campus visit. Dmitry works as sustainability project manager for *Larsen Engineers* in Rochester, working on a variety of sustainability projects throughout upstate NY. We eagerly tapped Dmitry to present on some of his project work in our *Sustainability Perspectives* speaker series in late October.





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

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

BYOB Sustainability Prize

We were quite pleased to see so many teams in this year's Be Your Own Boss (BYOB) business idea competition incorporated social impact and/or sustainability aspects. Among the finalists were an idea for biodegradable surgical screws and a sustainable/socially responsible restaurant concept. Creator of *Koala*, a eucalyptus-based toilet paper, first-year business major **Nick Scanlon** explained that this fast-growing, renewable resource provides 30x more paper pulp volume per year, plus the eucalyptus oil can soothe sensitive skin. Senior Business majors **James DeLuna** and **Colton Jaquith**, working as *JD Industries*, developed a concept to repurpose shuttered factories and warehouse spaces as housing. These two teams shared the BYOB competition's Grand Prize and tied for 1st place honors in the *Social Impact* category. The Center for

Sustainability director awarded *Koala* its \$500 Sustainability Prize.



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

Sustainability Outreach Activities

Wells Campus Greens organized Earth Week 2022 with a variety of engaging and educational activities. Several of the Center for Sustainability planned Spring events were included in the line-up, but new activities included a “weigh the waste” activity by Sustainable Materials Management intern **Hannah Kulla**



'23 during one lunch period in the Dining Hall that week. This activity proved somewhat useful to educating diners about strategies to reduce food waste. Around this period, Hannah also undertook a food waste composting pilot in the residence hall kitchens. With permission from Student Life, Hannah placed special green compost bins and instructional signage. Students seemed to appreciate the access to food waste composting in their living spaces, but Facilities was not quite so enamored of this food waste diversion pilot, so at their request, we ended the compost experiment early.



Also included in the Earth Week activities was an *Earth Day Fest* organized by the students in Dr. **Jen Myers'** SUS/PSY 335 *Psychology of Sustainability* class. Among the activities on the campus Quad were custom decorating of tote bags (donated by **Jack Bjorkander** in Student Life), an upcycling workshop, and shopping from a smattering of food vendors and artisan crafters from the *Aurora Farmers Market*.

Among the grateful recipients of Wells College Seed Exchange seed packet donations (see more page 3), adjunct History lecturer **Rocco “Chip” Capraro**, on behalf of the City of Geneva's Green Committee, asked for a donation to support a children's planting workshop during their *Mission Zero* event in late April (at right). Similarly, we donated large quantities of seed packets to the *Boyce Thompson Institute's* Earth Day employee event, and to a patron giveaway called “Seeds of Hope”, organized by the *Mental Health Association of Cortland County (MHACC)* in honor of Mental Health Month in May. *MHACC* distributed seed packets throughout the community and attached an info card listing available mental health resources. We closed out our Seed Exchange season by giving the last of our inventory to a *Community Seed Swap* coordinated by *Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County's* horticulture program, as they were unable to offer their own in-person seed exchange program during COVID. We are delighted to support such worthy community awareness-raising events, and the seed companies who so generously donate seed to us for our *Seed Exchange* really appreciate knowing their seeds are helping these larger community impact programs. We were also reached out to this Spring by the staff of the *Weedsport Public Library*, asking for our advice on starting their own community Seed Exchange program to better support gardeners and growers in the north end of Cayuga County.



The String Room Gallery hosted an interesting exhibit in early Spring. “Life as Clouds” was a group exhibition juried and curated by the students in the *Professional Practices in Visual Arts* course. “Life as Clouds” explored emergent themes among artworks by 18 regionally-based artists in celebration of the place we call home: the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee in upstate New York. Collectively, these artworks evoke questions about the connection between our human bodies and nature. Through various modalities and media, the artists explore eddies and currents existing in between our creations of self and our conceptions of the world around us. We were especially drawn to this exhibition piece by **Amanda Best**.

Earth Week 2022

Monday, April 18th
Earth Cookie Decorating 12:00-1:00PM
Sustainability Perspectives series talk at 12:30-1:30PM
“Research Perspectives at the Intersections of Climate and Energy Justice”
Presenter: Daniel Carrion, Director of Education, Yale Center on Climate Change and Health
Zoom #: 882 1733 5869 passcode: EY1797B
sponsored by the Center for Sustainability and the Environment

Tuesday, April 19th
Dress in Earth-Toned Clothing - all day
“Weigh the Waste” during lunch period
Location: Dining Hall
Sustainability Film: “Kiss the Ground” at 7:00-8:30PM
Location: DeVitt Lecture Room Zabriskie Hall 306
Organic popcorn and butter served
sponsored by the Center for Sustainability and the Environment

Wednesday, April 20th
Tie Dye Fun from 7:00-9:00PM
Location: Sommer Center
sponsored by Wells Campus Greens

Thursday, April 21st
“Weigh the Waste” during lunch period
Location: Dining Hall
“Take out the Trash” - all day
Collect trash/recyclables around campus
Snap a cellphone photo of your collection
Email your photos to mbrown@wells.edu
to be entered to win a prize
“Around the World in 90 Minutes” at 7:00-8:30PM
Location: Sommer Center/Smith Hall
sponsored by the Center for Sustainability and the Environment

Friday, April 22nd
Earth Week Festival from 1:00-4:00PM
Location: Sommer Center lawn
Activities include: Tote bag decorating, Upcycling Station, and Farmers Market station
sponsored by SUS/PSY 335 Psychology of Sustainability
Movie Night: “Wall-E” from 7:00-9:00PM
Location: Sommer Center / Smith Hall
sponsored by Wells Campus Greens

