



# | Sustainability Segments |

A newsletter about renewal.

Volume 1, Issue 1

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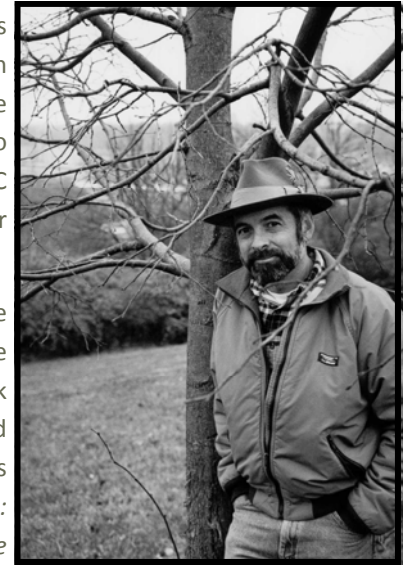
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## Dr. John Tallmadge To Visit GRCC

Dr. John Tallmadge is an author of three books and numerous essays on nature, culture, literature, and human values. With over thirty years experience in doctoral and undergraduate education, Dr. Tallmadge is a leader in national organizations to environmental studies, nature writing, and ecocriticism. GRCC is pleased to announce that Dr. Tallmadge will be visiting our campus from **April 14th through the 16th**.

The public events scheduled include a presentation on "Nature and the City: The Sustainable Context", a nature walk through downtown G.R., and a public reading from John's book *"The Cincinnati Arch: Learning From Nature In The City"*. To be a part of any of



these events, please contact Amy Sprouse (asprouse@grcc.edu) x4162 or Dr. Gary Burbridge (gburbrid@grcc.edu) x4371.

### 2009 Sustainability Calendar of Events

- March 20** - *First Day of Spring*
- April 7** - *Next SAC meeting*
- April 14-16** - *John Tallmadge Visit*
- April 19** - *WMEAC Benefit Concert*
- April 22** - *Earth Day*
- May 31 - June 2** - *Greening the Heartland*

## Energy Bytes



The latest update on the college's energy savings:

Cost avoidance—\$418,491 (20%)

Special savings—\$91,937 (education discount)

## Earth Club Corner

Power Shift 2009 was a great success! Twelve thousand young leaders converged on Washington, D.C. to participate in Power Shift '09 over the weekend to demand that the President and Congress pass bold, just climate and energy policy in 2009 that dramatically reduces emissions, creates millions of green job and repowers America with 100% clean energy. Despite a snow storm that paralyzed much of the city, the four-day event concluded with a day full of hundreds of lobby visits and a rally with more than 3,000 youth on Capitol Hill. Read more about it here: <http://www.powershift09.org>

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*Here in the  
impermanent yet  
continuously  
flowing WORLD  
let us stand  
TOGETHER for  
future  
generations.*

## From the Director's Desk

*Welcome to the first issue of the newsletter!*

*We hope that you will enjoy reading about what's going on at GRCC around sustainability. While the word may seem a little confusing to you at first, just remember that what we are all about is working toward a sustainable future, making sure that our children and their children and beyond will have a world fit to live in.*

*The Sustainability Council bases its work on what is often called the "Triple Bottom Line" of Economic Responsibility, Social Equity, and Environmental Respect. We believe that all three are important, and that we cannot achieve that future we hope for if we do not pay attention to all three components!*

*- Dr. Gary Burbridge*

## Benefitting Beneficial Insects

Think before you spray a pesticide. You may kill the insects that are helping you keep pests in check. This means you will have to spray more in the future. Also, insects benefit your garden by pollinating your plants, helping them grow and propagate.

**How to make your good bugs feel welcome.** Beneficial insects are more likely to remain in your garden if there is a ready food supply. While you can buy many of these predators, it's probably cheaper and more effective to encourage the ones already in your garden. Many beneficial insects need to sip flower nectar to survive. Plan your garden to feed beneficial insects by choosing a variety of plants that will bloom as many months of the year as possible. Here are some things you can do to support your beneficial insect population:



**Plant nectar-producing flowers** to further increase the food supply. Plants in the cabbage, carrot, and sunflower family are especially attractive to beneficial insects.

**Control ants**, which may prevent predators from controlling aphids. **Don't use persistent, broad-spectrum, contact insecticides.** These provide only temporary pest control and are likely to kill more of the natural enemies than the pests. When their enemies are gone, pest populations may soar and become more of a problem than before they were sprayed.

**Cover bare dirt in your garden with mulch of dead leaves or grass clippings**, thick enough to shade the soil surface. This provides shelter for spiders, which are the number one predator on insects. (Most of these spiders are tiny.)

**Don't forget the birds.** Birds can also be very helpful with controlling pests in your garden. Trees, shrubs with berries, birdhouses, and water features all encourage birds to visit your yard.

Here is a helpful web site which lists native bugs to the Michigan area: <http://nativeplants.msu.edu>

## What's New with WMEAC

**Help create our Community-Based Stormwater Plan!** The City of Grand Rapids and WMEAC have partnered up to create a Community-Based Stormwater Plan—and we need your help! Stormwater is rain that did not soak into the ground or get taken up by plants as nature intended. When stormwater runs through our communities, it becomes dirty and polluted. It washes animal waste, garbage, fertilizers, chemicals, gas, and oil from cars into our storm sewers. This pollution then flows into our streams, rivers, and lakes.

You and everyone in your community can help solve our stormwater problems. Practical solutions to capture stormwater onsite are available. WMEAC and the City of GR need your help to plan and get the word out about stormwater solutions that homeowners, businesses, schools, and faith communities can use. This problem CAN be solved! **Get involved!** Contact WMEAC at (616) 451-3051 x33 or [rsvp@wmeac.org](mailto:rsvp@wmeac.org)

***Please join WMEAC for the Richie Havens concert on the  
19th of April in honor of Earth Day!***

Folk/Rock Legend  
**Richie Havens**  
with Harry Manx  
Earth Day Benefit Concert

Sponsored By  
YOUR LOGO HERE

**Sunday April 19th 7:00 PM**  
**Fountain Street Church**  
Earth Day Expo & Picnic Starting at 5:30 PM

Proceeds benefit:  
West Michigan Environmental Action Council

97 LAM-FM  
Media Sponsor

WMEAC

Tickets: \$30 Available at all Schuler Book Stores  
& on-line at [liveatthefountain.org](http://liveatthefountain.org) or [wmeac.org](http://wmeac.org)

## In the Sustainable Classroom

### Sara Yob reports:

Winter 2009 Introduction to the Study of the Future is hosting expert speakers from within the college and the community. Steve Abid, Elaine Kampmueller, Holly Hoare, and Brian Shultz are presenting environmental economics, water and mineral resources, biodiversity, and green building. We also have sessions with Rachael Hood, WMEAC director, on WM environmental issues, Aaron Weissner, founder of Localfuture, discussing peak oil, Andrew Brower, director of the Source, addressing social equity in the Grand Rapids community, and Karen Lubbers of Lubbers Family Farm on organic and cooperative farming and permaculture. This is woven into discussions of the primary reading assignment, Thomas Friedman's *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*. Six SS120 students, led by Nick Wickar, and Sara Yob, as the holder of the bus list, attended Power Shift '09 in Washington DC. 10000 students met for 3 days, culminating in 7 hours of lobby training and sessions with congressional representatives on climate and energy issues.

### Maryann Lesert reports:

From Fall, 2008 - EN 102 Focused on the Environment & Sustainability

Students in Maryann Lesert's EN 102 classes hosted journalist and environmental author Peter Annin's visit to GRCC in November 18-19, 2008. Students read Annin's book, *The Great Lakes Water Wars*, and as part of their writing project to increase awareness of local water issues, students wrote and distributed conservation tips as a public service document titled "Great Lakes, Great Time to Conserve." Students also attended a "Great Lakes Water Issues Panel" of local/regional experts, moderated by Gary Burbridge. Thanks goes to The College of Arts & Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Sustainability Council for supporting this event.

This semester, students in the Environmentally Focused EN 102 will receive a visit from author John Tallmadge, who will be on campus in April. We'll also be writing more Great Lakes PSA's to be published in local sources.

## Starting a Sustainable Compost Pile



The First Day of Spring is March 20th which means that yard cleanup is not too far behind. Have you ever thought about starting a compost pile?

Compost piles are beneficial both economically and environmentally. It is a wonderful way to recycle your vegetable, flower, and plant scraps, coffee grounds, egg shells, and even some cardboard and paper! In exchange for turning it every now and again and adding a little h<sub>2</sub>o, you will have your very own (free!) source of rich organic soil that can be added back into your soil for your flower beds and your veggie gardens. Not to mention

that is helps reduce the amount of refuse you have going into your trash each week!

The following are some helpful hints on getting you started on making and maintaining your very own compost pile.

- You may want to create a simple, three-sided compost box to contain your compost or just create a compost pile. For your compost pile to heat up properly so organic matter can decompose, it should be at least three feet square and three feet tall.

- Rule of thumb: The more you manage your compost pile, the quicker you will get rich, black compost. Management ranges from simply leaving the pile (everything decays in time, but this method may take a year or more) to turning the compost once or twice a week with a garden spade so the exterior of the pile is turned under.

- The pile should be kept damp. You can check for moisture by turning over the compost with a spade to check the center of the pile. Depending upon the weather, you may have to sprinkle your compost pile to keep it damp, or cover it with a

tarp to prevent it from being soaked regularly.

- The interior of the pile should be warm. This indicates decomposition of the organic materials is taking place.

- There should be both "green" (nitrogen-rich) and "brown" (carbon-rich) components in your compost pile. Common green items include grass clippings, yard refuse (old vegetable stalks, last fall's flower stalks), coffee grounds, eggshells, barnyard animal manure, and fruit and vegetable kitchen waste. Brown components might include dried leaves, pine needles, spoiled hay, and straw.

- Do no compost chemically-treated grass clippings, cat litter or dog feces, meat, fat or bones. Also do not add any diseased plant materials.

It may take a matter of months to a year before you get optimum results, but it is well worth the time and effort. They don't call compost 'black gold' for nothing!

GRCC's Media Technologies department has started recycling old CDs, DVDs and VHS tapes.

Utilizing the service from Greendisk.com, we are able to package bundles of 30lbs of material at a time. If you are interested in taking part in this effort, please contact Klaas Kwant at 234-3833.

## Fulton Street Farmer's Market Opens May 1st

A Grand Rapids institution since 1922 commonly known as "the Farmer's Market," the Fulton Street Market offers locally-grown fruits and vegetables, plants and home-made arts and crafts. Reap the benefits and pleasures of freshly-picked fruits and vegetables, as well as hand-made items!

The Fulton Street Farmer's Market has provided local produce to the City of Grand Rapids for over eighty years. The Market is located in the Midtown Neighborhood and is operated by the Neighborhood Association. The Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department provides this venue offering produce, flowers, meat, eggs, and local handmade items as a service to



the residents of Grand Rapids. Farmers markets provide a unique opportunity for urban dwellers to connect with food producers and are great places to meet friends. They also cut down on the wasteful long-distance food distribution system. (Did you know that your food travels over 1000 miles on average?) Eat healthy and utilize the Fulton Street Farmer's Market as a sustainable choice for your own food purchasing.

**Fulton Street Market**  
1145 E. Fulton St.  
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