

Lackluster turnout at sustainability presentation

JENS OUROM
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Representatives from the David Suzuki Foundation, Sierra Youth Coalition, and Canadian Federation of Students embarked westward from St. John's, Newfoundland to commence their biodiesel-fueled bus tour of 21 Canadian universities on Sept. 30, and arrived last Monday at UNB Fredericton.

A diverse panel of presenters addressed a "small, but intimate" group of environmentally conscious students and faculty, as ex-Mountain Equipment Co-op CEO, current Suzuki Foundation CEO, and keynote speaker Peter Robinson commented. The line-up of speakers also included Brendan Brazier, a professional Ironman triathlete, vegan and author, and Fredericton-based Conservation Council of New Brunswick's David Coon.

Students for Sustainability is - besides also being the name of STU's student environmental activism group - an initiative to inform and also inspire students across Canada out of environmental apathy. The three main initiatives of this particular tour include, but are not limited to, reducing waste, emissions, and commodification of natural resources such as Canada's fresh water.

The SFS tour hopes to reach 50,000 Canadian students over the month of October, but if UNB's lackluster attendance is any indicator, they may have trouble reaching that goal. The lack of Dr. Suzuki's presence, as he spoke in Fredericton already this spring, may have been a factor in the attendance numbers, but despite this fact, cautious optimism was most certainly a theme for the afternoon.

"I'm up for the challenge and I hope you are, too," stated Coon, in regard to global warming, while Robinson echoed that statement by

saying "we have to approach this with a sense of hope."

Nevertheless, the near-overwhelming challenges that lie ahead did not go unaddressed. Coon specifically addressed and chided "a society hard-wired to pollute," and pleaded for a "fundamentally transformational change in society."

Robinson, on the other hand, tackled the current global economic uncertainty's effect on the environmental movement, admitting that shifting priorities from sustainability to economics may have unfortunately "set us back about five years."

Brazier, who has managed to make a career out of triathlon racing while eating only plant-based foods, explained how the intricacies and dilemmas our current food supply system has left us with have left us "overfed and undernourished."

This system of sustenance means "food production and transport is the largest greenhouse gas producer," clarified Brazier. And that is without even mentioning the methane gas emitted by Confined Animal Feeding Operations - otherwise known as cow flatulence.

Fortunately, "all the technology already exists, all the knowledge already exists" to solve the looming crisis, stated Robinson - who, through managing private, public, and now, with the Suzuki Foundation, non-profit organizations, has managed to maintain a positive outlook.

Overall, the panel of experts and the informational displays that SFS brought the message of a very stark reality - the time for change is now.

Coon summed that economic reform is needed through government "to serve people, their communities, and the environment," with the best way to achieve this goal to "vote for the environment."

Robinson laid bare the consequences of our indifference, and clearly sounded a call for action as, "the alternative is unacceptable."

Pumping up pedestrian safety



Reg Jerrett, Director of Security and Traffic at UNB, at a crosswalk with legally blind student Derek Ness. Both want more pedestrian safety awareness.

HILARY PAIGE SMITH
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Lines are drawn and signs are erected, yet pedestrians and motorists continue to neglect their safety on campus.

The University of New Brunswick has thousands of students, and therefore thousands of pedestrians on campus. Combine that with the number of students that have vehicles and the number that neglect road safety and it could equal disaster.

Reg Jerrett, Director of Security and Traffic for UNB, is passionate about campus safety and has been taking extra precautions in recent years to ensure the well-being of pedestrians and motorists alike.

People may have noticed a speed radar trailer adjacent to the pedestrian-heavy Joy Kidd, Lady Dunn and Tibbits complex on Mackay Drive. This speed radar registers the speed of the passing vehicles and flashes the correct speed

when the maximum is surpassed.

"The speed radar trailer is a reminder to motorists as they're driving on campus roads that the maximum posted speed is 40 kilometres and then when they see the speed radar trailer hopefully that will alert them to the fact that 'Hey, I better slow down,'" says Jerrett.

Though there are painted crosswalks and signs to give them prominence, Jerrett says students still neglect to use them and cross anywhere to save time and effort.

Jerrett's message to pedestrians is to "be aware of the fact that we do have a heavy population of vehicles on campus at this time of the year and they should pay particular attention when crossing, even at designated crosswalks."

"I know a lot of students cross basically anywhere on campus and we would encourage them to use the designated crosswalk locations for their safety."

Motorists are aware that campus pedestrians do not always walk between the lines, he explains;

however, many are not aware that there are students out there who are visually impaired and cannot always judge the proximity of oncoming vehicles.

Derek Ness, a legally blind student, has been in four close calls with negligent motorists, with every incident happening at a designated crosswalk. Ness can see the shape and shades of oncoming cars, but has to be extra vigilant while crossing as running mid-crosswalk is not an option for him for fear of obstacles.

Three of Ness's four incidents occurred while crossing at the Pacey and Mackay crosswalk near the Student Union Building. One of them involved a car neglecting to stop until it was mid-intersection and expected Ness to manoeuvre around it. The fourth occurred at the Bailey Drive crosswalk to McConnell Hall where a car neglected to stop or even slow down as it swerved around Ness. Ness notes that the car was likely exceeding the speed limit.

"My concern is that not only myself, but others who are legally

blind or perhaps deaf or hard of hearing, maybe even another disability would have issues with the same things and maybe they're not comfortable coming forward with these issues," Ness says. "I, myself, am comfortable becoming an advocate and finding a solution with the appropriate authorities."

Additional measures have been taken on campus, including the installation of speed bumps on Bailey Drive. Unfortunately, speed bumps cannot be installed on Mackay Drive as it is a City Transit route and the buses cannot drive over them. In the future Jerrett says that they are looking to put up signs warning drivers of students with disabilities to promote caution.

Ness and Jerrett agree wholeheartedly on the importance of campus safety.

"These occurrences aren't acceptable," says Ness. "As Mr. Jerrett has put forward, the campus is a pedestrian friendly campus, or that's certainly the intention, and this isn't the average street."

Research Centre taking green initiatives on campus

SARAH RATCHFORD
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Many scientists agree that the condition of the environment is depleting, and humans are largely at fault - a statement so prevalent of late that it can't even be considered news.

But as part of a young generation which has plenty of time to make change, it is apparent to many that students must do their part to make a difference or the damages we create will become irreversible, and we will be forcing the consequences of our actions onto our children and grandchildren.

Shawn Dalton, Director of UNB's Environment and Sustainable Development Research Centre, says that there are already some initiatives at work on the UNB campus. There is currently a Campus Sustainability Plan which has been created by UNB undergraduate students studying Environmental Issues. The plan includes operations relating to electricity, solid waste, and other ways to reduce our carbon footprints.

The aim of the plan is to reduce our overall environmental footprint at UNB.

The plan has not yet been put into action. However, the UNB Sustainability Committee is working on implementing it, says Dalton.

"We haven't decided specifically what we will and will not do," says Dalton.

The ESDRC is pushing for the instalment of an energy steward in each building on campus, whose job would be to turn off lights and computers and other energy consuming machines.

The reason administration gives for leaving the lights on in classrooms is to "make them more inviting," says Dalton sarcastically.

Work is being done to implement sensors which would turn lights on when a room is entered, and turn them off when it is vacated. In the mean-time, however, a lot of energy is being wasted by leaving them on at all times.

One experiment which has

already been completed by UNB to help the environment is the running of a sustainable Orientation Week, says Dalton. Paperless orientation kits were given out to new students as opposed to the paper-stuffed ones of the past.

The ESDRC is also in the process of working on several other projects which pertain to the Fredericton area as a whole, including resource and watershed management and work on climate change in partnership with other companies, says Dalton.

When asked her opinion on the single most important task we can take as individuals to promote environmental sustainability, Dalton vehemently responds, "buy less."

"Consume less," she says, "We are all over-consumers in this society."

"In the last 100 years," Dalton says, "the planet's population has increased by 4 times; the economy has grown 40 times as large as it was 100 years ago. That tells us that consumption rates are right off the mark."

Dalton also has clear ideas on actions the student population can make against climate change. She advises us to walk and bike more.

"Students are in a unique position to push the administration," she says.

Another tip Dalton suggests for students is to purchase products made with recycled material, such as bags, paper towel - even vintage clothing counts as recycled material, and it allows the wearer to get creative. There are plenty of places to find vintage garb that are close to home, including reNeu boutique and Value Village.

This tip applies to all members of the community, not just students.

"When you buy something, make a sound decision," Dalton says.

As far as homeowners, Dalton says they need to be aware that "30-40% of greenhouse gases come from private buildings." Students and other concerned members of the community can push builders in the community to make environmentally friendly choices when building homes and

other structures, Dalton says.

"People that educate contractors need to teach them sustainable practices," Dalton says. "Your generation is the next big buying group."

People talk about wanting to make change for a healthier environment, but "we need to translate talk into action," Dalton says.

When confronted with current environmental issues such as pollution and global warming, many people turn a blind eye and refuse to claim personal fault. When asked her opinion on where the fault lies - with everyone or just large corporations - Dalton responds "it's a catch-22."

"If we didn't buy the products, corporations wouldn't produce them," Dalton says. At the same time, however, it works the opposite way. As a result, activists and others who are passionate about our environment must "encourage everyone to make a change," she says. "Nobody's off the hook as far as making change."

"I've been in this business for 15-20 years," says Dalton. "When I graduated from my Masters degree at Yale, the people I graduated with were going off to Third World countries rather than beginning with change in their own backyards."

The progress needed to improve our world can seem quite daunting. Reducing the damage made can seem impossible, especially since carbon dioxide, which is the product of burning fossil fuels, stays in the atmosphere for 50-200 years. Dalton, however, has hope for the future.

"I would like to see developers in the woodlot use sustainable procedures, even given the restraints," says Dalton. "The City is working in conjunction with developers on what I call 'Sustainable Fredericton.'"

This plan will include ideas for sustainable design for the city. Dalton also notes that UNB Fredericton has committed to preserving 50% of its woodlots, which make up one quarter of the standing forest in Fredericton.

"The fact that the University has



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickan

UNB's Environment and Sustainable Development Research Centre is promoting initiatives to benefit the environment. While recycling is one step to being sustainable, the Centre also suggests buying recycled products.

got tips? news@thebruns.ca

Southside Bottle Exchange



Has moved. new location
70 Timothy Ave. Hanwell

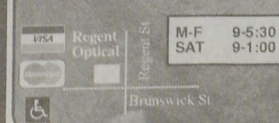
Take first street on left past Kingswood which is Timothy Drive, then take first right onto Timothy Ave. we're 3rd building on right.
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