

Sustainability fans ready and revved for Recyclemania

BY NICOLE BARNARD
STAFF WRITER

On your mark. Get set. Recycle!
Introducing Recyclemania, an international recycling competition that is coming soon to a school near you.

Spring 2014, the sustainability committee will host this eight-week long event, taking part in the international recycling competition.

Sophomore and Sustainability Committee head Lily Collins explained further.

"I don't understand why we're still asking the question of why is it important to be sustainable..."

Lily Collins, sophomore

"Basically, you're measuring the ratios of recycled materials to trash materials," she said. "Whoever has the highest ratio of materials wins."

The competition has grown dramatically over the past few years.

"Recyclemania was started in 2001," said David Petree, director of environmental sustainability. "Guilford (College) has participated since 2009. Last year, nearly 700 colleges and universities participated. That number represents about 15 percent of all colleges and universities in the U.S. Perhaps

not surprisingly, that number is not far from the total number of colleges and universities that have signed the American Colleges and Universities Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC)."

There are several goals of the competition. "Overall goals (are) to increase recycling efforts and reduce waste ... generate attention and support for campus recycling programs (and) have a fair and friendly competition," according to Recyclemania's website, recyclemaniacs.org

If those are the goals nation-wide, what are some of Guilford's individual goals?

"There has not been a lot of student involvement (in the past)," said Collins. "It wasn't in my face all the time. That's our goal: to make it a big thing."

Of course, promoting recycling is also a huge goal.

"(We're) trying to encourage colleges to recycle more instead of just throwing out everything," said junior Nathan Secrest, last year's Sustainability Department work-study student. "There is a tendency to just classify anything unwanted as trash. Many types of plastic and paper can actually be recycled. For the most part, you wind up with a lot more recycling."

Senior Will Kimmell, the other Sustainability Committee head, hopes to focus on both Guilford and the environment as a whole.

"Our primary goal (is) decreasing waste

headed to the landfill," said Kimmell.

Even without much student involvement, however, Guilford has done well in the past.

"Last year, without any major advocacy, public relations campaigns or large student engagement, Guilford ranked 22nd out of the 274 participants (and) number one in North Carolina," said Kimmell.

However, Kimmell also wishes that students would get more involved.

"Though I am glad we are in the top 10 percent of participants, this ranking speaks more to the college's infrastructural and administrative policies regarding waste reduction than to the student body's participation in waste reduction practices," said Kimmell. "If we want to remain an institution rapidly emerging as a leader in undergraduate sustainability education and practices, the student body needs to recognize our responsibility in supporting and maintaining this leadership role."

There are several events going on during this eight-week period, including a talk by Nancy Hoffmann, a Valentine's Day event and Young's event on February 13.

"We're hosting a movie in the Greenleaf called 'Tapped' about water usage and non-recyclable water bottles," said Young. "We've also contacted (the Campus Activities Board), who gave us reusable water bottles that they don't need and we're going to have people decorate those with Crafternoon."

So what does Guilford hope comes of this competition?

"It takes (several) weeks of habit building to actually create a habit," said Secrest. "The idea is that this is an eight week competition. If you encourage people to start recycling and

then build that habit after, they'll continue to recycle."

Kimmell hopes has high hopes for the future of Guilford.

"(We) believe Guilford can unify to become a nationally recognized center for sustainable leadership," said Kimmell.

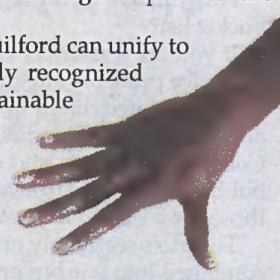
Collins hopes to educate the student body.

"I don't understand why we're still asking the question of why is it important to be sustainable," said Collins. "That's a given. We should all be aware of what needs to be done and what we can do."

Petree believes that Guilford is going to have its greatest year yet.

"This year Guilford is poised to have its best Recyclemania competition ever," said Petree. "The Student Sustainability Council

working with our office has planned weekly events throughout the eight week competition to insure the educational component is as good as it can be."

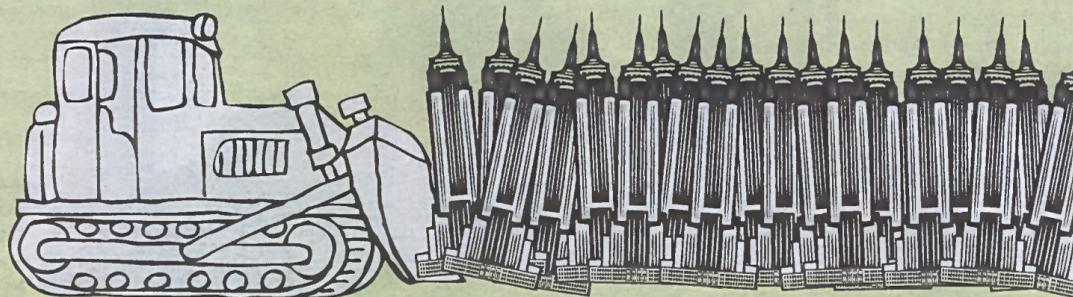


Recycling's real impact, explained and quantified



If all the dimensional lumber used to build the 1.2 million new homes constructed in the United States each year were laid end to end, it would extend 3 million miles, the equivalent of going to the moon and back six and a half times.

In 2011, 55 billion aluminum cans were produced. 10 billion were recycled, 45 billion were incinerated. That's 45 billion more than were recycled in 2000 — in other words, enough cans to fill the Empire State Building 20 times.



RECYCLED PAPER

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Each ton (2,000 pounds) of recycled paper can save:

380 gallons of oil

7,000 gallons of water

4,100 kWh of energy

3.5 cubic yards of landfill

17 30-foot trees

eliminating 60 pounds of air pollutants

Source: Greenwaste.com

Graphic by: Samir Hazboun