

Workshop speakers encourage recycling



Caroline Parker shows Focus audience a newspaper from July 1975.
PHOTO: Beth Collins

By BETH COLLINS

The FOCUS Workshop series for 1993 opened with a seminar presented by local environmentalist Caroline Parker, Executive Director of "Keep Wayne County Beautiful," and Tim Daily, WCC college transfer student and Green Coordinator for Walmart.

Fifteen students, faculty, and staff attended the seminar held in LC 210.

The workshop series is sponsored by the office of Student Development, under the direction of Gina Bowers, counselor.

E.A.R.T.H. (Every American's Responsibility to Help) is an environmental organization, which educates the public about recycling and the effects of contamination when recycling is improperly implemented.

Recycling, according to Parker, has practical applications for the community.

Each day 450-500 tons of garbage goes to the landfill, the equivalent of 571 cars, or one million pounds of garbage.

She estimated that each of the 104,000 residents of Wayne County contributes 8.5 pounds of garbage per day.

This figure compares with the national average of 3.5 pounds per person.

One effect of this much garbage is the contamination of the water supply.

The ground water level of Wayne County is currently at 12 feet.

Two and one half years ago, the north Wayne County landfill was closed because of violations of the regulations concerning ground water, Parker reported.

Contamination of surface water (above 12 feet), occurs, Parker said, when garbage seeps down and pollutes ground water.

Improper disposal of motor oil can contaminate up to one million gallons of water.

Hi-tech landfills regulated by government agencies are due by 1998.

However, the high cost of such facilities means waste disposal fees will likely increase, Parker said, from \$14.00 per ton to \$50.00 per ton in 1998.

Wayne County pays \$250,000.00 per year to get rid of garbage.

But costs can be cut, Parker said, by recycling.

The public has a common misconception about paper disintegration in the county landfill.

To dispel a common belief that paper is automatically biodegradable, Parker held up a newspaper dated February 12, 1975, that had recently been recovered from the Wayne County landfill.

"Except for the smell and discoloration, this paper is definitely in full reading condition," Parker said.

No decay happens because no oxygen is present at the bottom of a mound of garbage up to 45 feet high, Parker said.

Paper is the most recycled item. Forty-three percent of all landfill waste is paper.

Parker also emphasized that people who recycle need to be careful not to defeat the purpose of their efforts with contamination.

Used paper towels and toilet paper are not recyclable.

Residue left in glass containers and in cans can cause roaches.

Squeeze plastic bottles, Parker said, are on their way out because plastic is not a renewable resource.

Although area stores advertise their plastic bags are recyclable, as often as not they end up at the landfill, Parker informed the audience.

The best answer for the consumer is to carry a cloth bag to the grocery store, said Parker.

"The incentive to recycle is simple," Parker said, "it's the law."

Tim Daily informed the audience that steps are being taken to make WCC an environmentally friendly campus by increasing the visibility of recycling bins for paper and cans.

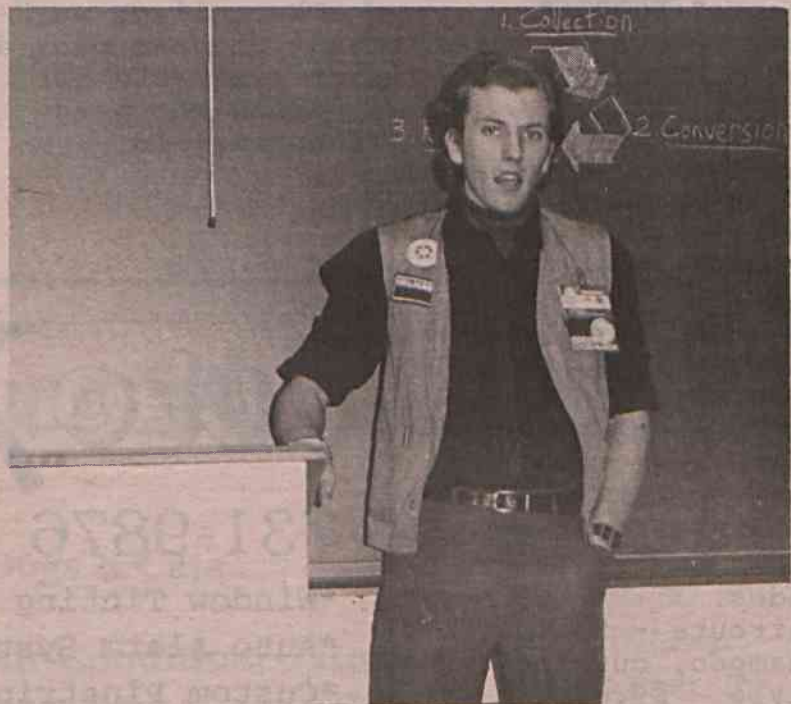
It is time for students to become more responsible shoppers, said Daily.

As consumers, students should pay attention to packaging when making purchases, Daily emphasized.

"Take a look at what you're throwing away," Daily said. "Cut down on waste. Pay attention to packaging when making purchases. Stay informed about guidelines for recycling and recycling locations."

At the conclusion of the lecture, Parker and Daily gave out literature on recycling as well as vehicle litter bags and portable ashtrays.

**Recycle
this
paper,
please**



Tim Daily addresses Focus Workshop participants about E.A.R.T.H.
PHOTO: Beth Collins