

+ SUMMER IN MALAWI...

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Foothill College Center for a Sustainable Future

CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

FOOTHILL HOSTS THE SILICON VALLEY WATERSHED SUMMIT

Over 240 participants converged on the Foothill Campus last Fall to plan the protection and enhancement of the watersheds of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. The summit brought together agencies like the Santa Clara Water District and Midpeninsula Open Space District, with city government, officials and environmental groups like Acterra and Friends of Adobe Creek. Kudos to Sustainability Committee member Dr. Gillian Schultz, who participated on the planning committee for this important event!!

**EMERALD CAMPUS
LECTURE SERIES** gears up in Winter with a talk by Raphael Rosen, President of Carbon Lighthouse



+ OUR MISSION

Foster ecoliteracy across the curriculum

Revitalize & re-envision general education through the lens of sustainability

Cultivate sustainable values and practices on campus

Collaborate with the greater community toward a sustainable future

AN ELECTRIFYING DECISION...

By Kelly Benson

When a driver decides to be more sustainable on the road the answer of how best to do this is not as clear, concise and straightforward as it was a decade ago. The multitude of options has grown from just a handful of hybrid vehicles, as technological advancements in battery power and alternative fuels flood the markets. Sustainable technological options today range from hybrid, like the Toyota Prius; to a plug-in hybrid, like the Chevy Volt; to fully electric, as in the Nissan Leaf.

There are also diesel, E85 ethanol and hydrogen vehicles. Within most categories we are seeing an increase in models from the majority of major vehicle manufacturers as well as a rise in start-ups. Out of these options, one in particular is on the brink of mass production, fueled by intense competition and hailed as “the future of

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vehicles.” It is the 100 percent electric vehicle that is the prizewinner for most sustainable, yet is still in its early stages of refinement. If and when you decide to plug into this exciting new trend, let the following list of pros and cons guide your way.

The Pros:

All-electric cars are zero emission vehicles.

It’s clear that vehicle emissions wreak havoc on air quality, and it’s particularly evident in big cities. With so many cars on the roads around the world, eliminating car emissions is a major step toward improving the environment. Hybrids were a good first step, but they only significantly reduce emissions when you are sitting in traffic. When your foot is on the gas, traditional hybrids are similar to driving a regular car. Electric cars are

truly eco-friendly cars that have no tail pipes and no exhaust and driving an electric car is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint.

You don’t need gas. Ever. As gas prices continue to rise, this factor becomes an even greater cost-effective decision.

Tax incentives. The United States Federal Government gives tax credits to people who purchase approved, eco friendly vehicles. Many states offer incentives too.

Utility incentives. In Northern California, PG&E offers reduced energy rates for charging your vehicle.

Rebates. California residents are eligible for a \$2500 rebate under the Clean Vehicle Rebate Project.

You can drive in the carpool lane.
Winning!

Fast acceleration. Electric cars like the Leaf and the Tesla have really fast, smooth acceleration.

Electric cars are very quiet. There is no rumbling engine noise when you start the car, nor while you are driving. The children of the future won’t say “vrooom” when they play with toy cars. Perhaps they’ll make quiet electronic, beeping sounds instead?

The Cons:

Not going the distance. As amazing as the electric cars of today are, they cannot go as far on a single charge as a car that has a full tank of gasoline. The Nissan Leaf can go 120 miles if you drive

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**3000 MILES,
ONE FILL-UP...**

**LEASE IT.
DON'T BUY IT.**


**Foothill Counselor Jerry
Collilo, with his Chevy Volt**

approximately 38 miles per hour. If you drive on the highway, the distance you can go is cut in half. Basically, 100% electric vehicles are great local cars for commuting to work and running errands, but you have to always consider the distance you are going to travel before you hit the road. If you take a lot of long trips, you may prefer a Chevy Volt or a Prius Plug-In Hybrid, both of which run on gas when your charge runs out.

The charging challenge. When you buy an electric car, you need to get a charging station for your home. You

can charge with a regular 120-volt outlet, but it's pretty slow. The Leaf takes about 12 hours from zero to full charge with a 120-volt outlet compared to 6 hours or less if you charge with a 240-volt outlet. Once you're set with a charger at home, then you have to consider where you can charge when you're out and about. If there isn't any public EV charging stations near you, you will have to make sure that you have enough power for a round-trip. As electric vehicles become more popular, this should become less of an issue over time.

To own a 100 percent electric vehicle is a lifestyle choice that must mesh well with your already existing routine.

Long distance travelers must be wary and potentially own a second vehicle, but for a city dwelling, around town driver an electric vehicle may be just the ticket to cut costs while being eco-friendly. Keep an eye out for advancements in electric car technology, as well as charging stations in your area. 

Kelly Benson is an Intern with the Foothill Center for Sustainability, majoring in Environmental Studies.

NEW SUSTAINABILITY COURSES!!

ENGINEERING 39:
ENERGY, SOCIETY & THE
ENVIRONMENT

ENRG40: INTRODUCTION
TO CLEAN ENERGY
TECHNOLOGIES

ENGR 82:
PHOTOVOLTAIC & SOLAR
CELL DESIGN





SUMMER IN MALAWI

ONE STUDENT'S JOURNEY TO A NEW WORLD VIEW by Hriday Thakkar

It was four in the morning. The wild Turkeys cackled annoyingly outside the hut. As I lay in bed, my body felt extremely weak. My head throbbed. My stomach cried for food. This was the third night in a row I had refused to eat anything. There were dead ants in the food. I forced myself to go back to sleep that night, not knowing how I would survive the next fifty days in this remote

village in Malawi. The following morning, when I observed my host-family relish the very same food I had rejected, I realized how fortunate they considered themselves to be. So, I gathered all my courage, picked out the dead ants from my rice, and finally ate. As I suffered in hunger those three nights, I remembered all those millions of people who starved. Having been in their shoes

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has changed the way I look at the World. Ever since I returned to the United States, the word “complain” doesn’t exist in my dictionary anymore.

This was one of the many unexpected challenges I faced during my volunteer experience in Malawi, Africa. However impossible these challenges seemed at the beginning, I was not going to let it affect my determination to make a

difference in the lives of poverty-stricken families. Inspired by Muhammad Yunus’ quote, “Soon we saw that money going to women brought much more benefit to the family than money going to men,” I initiated a small non-profit micro-credit program that serves poor women entrepreneurs. Having quickly realized that sewing was an important tool women in developing countries needed to equip themselves with, my

mission for this program was to train women to sew bags and clothes. With my understanding of the micro-credit concept, I was able to implement a similar design into this platform. We started off with about 15 women in the training program and gave out three loans of roughly \$400 to previously trained women. I was humbled to see their excitement and enthusiasm during this training course. While interviewing one of the women in

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“WHEN I MAKE ENOUGH PROFIT FROM THIS LOAN, IT IS MY DREAM TO BUY A PAIR OF SHOES BEFORE I DIE.”

the program, her response touched my heart and sent shivers down my spine. Referring to the micro-loan she had received, she said, “When I make enough profit with this loan, it is my

dream to buy a pair of shoes before I die.” In that moment I was struck by how wide the gap is between the rich and the poor. This modest statement by the woman has motivated me to take the program to the next level.

Currently, I am in the process of hosting these women on GlobeIn.com, an internet platform for artisans in developing countries to help them sell their products globally. I feel privileged that I was able to put into practice the knowledge I gained in Economic Development to help create a

program so impactful and life-changing for these women.



Hriday Thakkar is an Intern with the Foothill Center for Sustainability, a business major, and President of the Entrepreneurship Club. He spent the summer volunteering through a nonprofit organization called The Kasimu Education Foundation, based here in Los Altos. In addition to the microcredit program he worked on, he also taught computer skills to teachers in Malawi.

Interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities like the ones in this article? You can visit the Kasimu Education Fund website to learn more about their work at www.kefmalawi.com

MICROCREDIT by Brian Evans

Microcredit is the provision of small loans to people ignored by traditional lenders of credit. Rather than borrow from local moneylenders at interest rates well over 100% annually – microfinance institutions attempt to keep the cost of borrowing as low as possible and often provide additional services (education, savings) for their clients. The Foothill College Microcredit Club meets Mondays 12 – 1 in room 3307. Our mission is threefold: educate ourselves about microcredit; educate others about microcredit; and raise money for microcredit loans.



We are offering a 1-unit course this Winter (and hopefully again in the Spring) that allows students to get involved in connecting microfinance institutions with local social entrepreneurs. There will also be a 1-unit honors seminar in the Fall quarter focusing on Microcredit and Global Poverty. Other opportunities are also available... please stop by a club meeting to learn more! You can also learn more online about microcredit by visiting www.kiva.org or www.grameen-info.org.



Brian Evans is an Economics Instructor and Advisor to the Microcredit Club.

This April, instead of traditional Earth Day activities, the Center has decided to focus its efforts on bringing to light the very real connection between the destruction happening to the planet, and the exploitation of our world's most vulnerable populations.

Human trafficking and exploitation is rampant in some parts of the world, but it exists on every continent, even our own.

Join us and learn more about what is happening.

DARE TO CARE...

- Exhibitors
- Special Screening:
NOT MY LIFE
- Slam Poetry
- Speakers
- MicroCredit Banquet:
HOPE FOR DESSERT
and more!

SAVE THE DATE!!
APRIL 17TH IS EARTH JUSTICE DAY



VISIT OUR FACEBOOK EVENT PAGE:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Earth-Justice-Day-at-Foothill-College/436052529806166>

EARTH JUSTICE DAY SPONSORS/SUPPORTERS:

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