



AQ SUSTAINABILITY NEWS

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*Brought to you by the interns at The Center for Sustainability:
Kaitlyn Aholt, Frank Blackman, and Alina Dhaseleer*

AQ Community Garden: Time to Sample the Soil



As we prepare for a winter wonderland, it's time to take one more look at the community garden and make sure it's in tip-top shape for the spring.

The Hillcrest garden coordinator, a master gardener, has agreed to take a soil sample from the community garden to assess the general health of the soil. This sample will provide information about what nutrients need to be added to the soil, to enhance next year's harvest. The Hillcrest coordinator will also help educate members of the Staff Sustainability Committee on what sustainable methods can be used in the coming years to increase and support the health of the soil and the overall success of the garden.

For more information: contact Jessica Eimer at eimerjes@aquinas.edu, x 1994

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Did You Know?

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day:

- Average household waste increases by **at least 25%**.
- Cumulatively, Americans add an extra **1 million tons of refuse per week** to our landfills.
- We produce **4 million tons** of trash just from gift wrap & shopping bags.

Strive to **REDUCE**, **REUSE**, and **RECYCLE** in order to cut down on Christmas waste.

Source:

http://www.recycleworks.org/resident/holiday_facts.html

Students Striving for Sustainability (S3)

Competing with Compost

S3 has completed its campus composting competition and the results are inspiring! As mentioned in the previous issue, this competition was an effort to increase composting by residents in the apartments and houses on campus. S3 members took a baseline weight of the compost in each building before the competition began in order to get a rough estimate of how much compost each building produces. The competition itself took place the week of December 5th and consisted of S3 members taking daily measurements of both total compost weight for each building and compost weight per capita.

The composting competition was a great success! All four apartments (A, B, C, and D) and the four houses (Woodcock, Knapp, Meijer, and Willowbrook) all participated. It was a close race, with Willowbrook having almost a pound per person lead on Apartment D. By the end of the week, Apartment D had taken the lead. Apartment C really stepped it up throughout the competition, increasing their composting from 0 pounds per person to 0.68 pounds per person. Thanks to everyone who participated. Apartment D residents will be celebrating their success with a pizza party after the holiday break. The final overall rank is as follows:

1. **Apartment D**
2. **Willowbrook**
3. **Woodcock**
4. **Apartment**
5. **Meijer**
6. **Apartment A**
7. **Apartment B**
8. **Knapp**



For more information...contact the club president, Stephanie Krajnik (sak001@aquinas.edu).

[Click here](#) to check out S3 on Facebook & post your comments/ideas!!

President: Stephanie Krajnik; Vice President: John DeAngelis; Treasurer: Barbara Groves;

Secretary: Kaitlyn Aholt; Senate Rep: Betsy Davis

“If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos.”--Edward O. Wilson

Green Chemistry Clearinghouse at Aquinas

The Michigan Green Chemistry Clearinghouse is now live!

For the past year, the **Center for Sustainability at Aquinas** has been working with partners to develop the Michigan Green Chemistry Clearinghouse. Funded by the State of Michigan, this web-based resource hopes to promote Michigan as a leader in green chemistry.

Now, you may be wondering what green chemistry means? According to the EPA, green chemistry is "...the design of chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances." Also known as sustainable chemistry, this design process must take into account the life cycle of a chemical product, from production to end-of-use.

The Green Chemistry Clearinghouse is funded by a four-year grant from the State of Michigan, with two requirements. First, the Clearinghouse must be designed to include the use of green chemistry expertise. Secondly, the Clearinghouse should engage in research, outreach and promotion of the use of its resources.

The Clearinghouse Project Team consists of the **Center for Sustainability** at Aquinas College, in partnership with Blue Sphere, Inc., Grand Valley State University, Sustainable Research Group LLC, the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor and the Great Lakes Green Chemistry Student Network. The Center for Sustainability leads the clearinghouse project by managing the grant and ensuring project success through effective team contributions.



For more information:

- Visit the Michigan Green Chemistry Clearinghouse website at <http://www.migreenchemistry.org/>
OR
- Contact Dr. Deborah Steketee @ 616-632-2930, stekedeb@aquinas.edu

We Want YOU...to submit your proposals!

What is the Aquinas Sustainability Initiative?

The Sustainability Initiative is a way for members of the Aquinas community to submit ideas to help the college transition to sustainability. These ideas are reviewed by committees of students, faculty, and staff to ensure that the entire campus community is involved in decision-making. Get involved!

New Proposal:

Reducing Waste at Information Stations



A proposal was recently submitted to the Aquinas Sustainability Initiative by Cindy Chapman regarding paper use on our campus information stations. The proposal requests that only 8 ½ x 11 inch sheets of paper be used for flyers on the information stations, eliminating the 11 x 17 option. The proposal also calls for a reduction of duplicate flyers and of flyers containing information that is already available online or elsewhere. This proposal seeks to reduce the *quantity* of paper used by the college, which could in turn reduce the *cost* of the paper to both the college and the environment. It could also hopefully allow for more space on the information boards.

According to procedure, this sustainability initiative proposal has been forwarded to the Staff Sustainability Committee for review.

Click [here](#) to see other proposals that have been submitted.

Got Any Ideas???

Follow these steps:

1. Fill out the [online submission form](#) OR submit your proposal in person at the **Center for Sustainability**.
2. One of three sustainability committees (faculty, student, or staff) will review your proposal.
3. Then, the Joint Sustainability Committee (composed of students, faculty, and staff) will review your proposal and give it a sustainability rating (from 1 through 5).
4. If your proposal earns a 4 or 5 rating: it will be sent back to its respective assembly for a vote.
5. If it wins the vote: it will go to the Provost for possible implementation.
6. If your proposal is rejected at any stage, it can be revised and resubmitted.



Link to: [sustainability initiative process flow-chart](#)

Questions/Feedback? Contact the Center for Sustainability:

Jessica Eimer (eimerjes@aquinas.edu) or Alina Dhaseleer (ahd001@aquinas.edu)

Monthly Student Feature:

Sara Sanders

Sustainability on Tap at Brewery Vivant



When asked why she chose to intern at [Brewery Vivant](#), Sara exclaimed, “Why wouldn’t anyone want to intern at Brewery Vivant?” Located on Cherry Street, Brewery Vivant not only makes fantastic local brews, but the owners, Kris and Jason, also have a genuine motivation to strive for sustainability and an understanding of the effort it takes to make that business transition. This dedication to sustainability combined with the team atmosphere at Brewery Vivant has given Sara a one-of-a-kind internship experience.

As the Sustainability Intern at Brewery Vivant, Sara is responsible for data collection and analysis of various aspects of both the brewery and the restaurant. Sara is currently working on compiling this data into the company’s first Corporate Social Responsibility Report! Additional projects include helping with various marketing efforts for the brewery and developing a report on future initiatives and costs of implementing these initiatives.

Sara is certainly putting her Aquinas sustainable business education to use in her work at Brewery Vivant through her passion for the social aspect of sustainability. She explains this interest by saying, “Reshaping how humans relate to each other as well as the surrounding environment is crucial to our success as a race. With education and passion, we have the opportunity to rebuild this natural bond and see it positively evolve.” Sara has been able to apply her knowledge of sustainable business at Brewery Vivant by using the sustainability to strengthen the brewery’s relationship with the community. Sara has found that her favorite part about this internship is that she is working for a business that was founded with sustainability goals; because the people she works with already have an understanding of the principles of sustainable business, Sara has been able to be truly productive rather than spending her energy on “reinventing the wheel.”

Sara’s internship at Brewery Vivant has both challenged her and given her confidence. She explains that one of the toughest challenges for her has been focusing on one idea from the many proposals that her team comes up with. She says, “I want to do so much but I have to limit which avenues I pursue to ensure the project’s success.” Sara has also discovered strengths in herself, one being her communication skills. The internship has given her a chance to practice discussing sustainable business topics with various groups of people, ranging from those who have no knowledge of sustainable business to those who are well-versed in it.

Sara will continue interning with Brewery Vivant next semester as she finishes up her undergraduate degree in sustainable business. Sara is also applying to graduate schools and considering the option of doing service work with AmeriCorps or the SCA.

A Christmas Tree Called “Ramona”

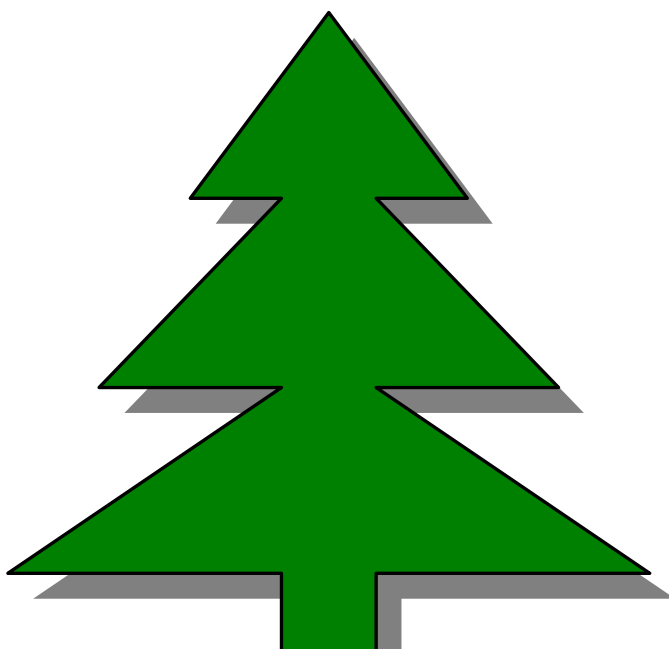
It’s that time of year when you may find yourself wondering: Should my Christmas tree smell of plastic or pine? The debate has been endless as to what the most environmentally-intelligent option is, but a lesser-known idea adds a new complexity to the debate...how about *renting* a Christmas tree?

People have started Christmas tree rental businesses in places like Oregon and California. Scott Martin is one such person who started a business in Los Angeles. People can rent a potted Christmas tree from his business, called Living Christmas. The tree will be delivered to their doorstep and then picked up after at most three weeks. The trees are then re-planted to sell the next year. Interestingly, Families have the option of tagging a tree with their name—one family called their tree Ramona—so that they can have the exact same Christmas tree (a bit taller) the following Christmas!

Check out the [NYTimes article](#) on Scott Martin.

Check out Scott Martin’s [Living Christmas](#) website.

Check out what [Earth911.com](#) has to say about real vs. fake Christmas trees.



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We're on the Web!

Find all AQ sustainability
information at:

aquinas.edu/sustainability

Campus Sustainability Groups

Faculty Sustainability Committee
Staff Sustainability Committee
Student Senate Sust. Committee
Joint Sustainability Committee
S3
Center for Sustainability

Want to Submit News?

If your group or committee has any news or upcoming events that you would like to have posted in next month’s newsletter, please contact

Alina Dhaseleer at
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