

The Green Piece...a weekly column by ENTS students

St. Olaf leads Carleton in sustainability efforts

BY MATT KIRBY

I became interested in environmentalism at St. Olaf at the beginning of fall term, when I read about it in the Northfield News. It outlined how their New Student Week had a theme: a sustainable lifestyle. Well, I was stunned to say the least. St. Olaf? I mean, Carleton's more environmentally conscious than they are, right? Right? So I talked with Chloe Stull-Lane, one of the leaders of their Environmental Coalition, and was only more surprised.

Apparently we aren't the only school in town with land

similar to the Arb. Olaf owns 700 acres adjacent to the school, 400 of which are rented out to farmers, 80 have been replanted with native trees, 150 with native prairie grasses, and 44 are practicing rotational agriculture.

But this can be viewed as a mere token. More practically, they've developed a list of ten principles which recognize that St. Olaf currently is not a sustainable entity and which intend to help it survive the 21st century. These principles are to guide every aspect of the college, most currently the construction of a new 'green' science complex.

But all that's mere child's play compared to their two large projects. As many have heard, St. Olaf has planned its own wind turbine, which will be operational in 2005 and will provide a third of their energy.

An additional project, and one that our school should be dwarfed and shamed by, is their composter. Their school produces 700 pounds of waste daily. Starting next Jan., that waste will go into a composter, one that can handle up to a ton per day and 14 days later produce viable fertilizer for use on their farms.

Well, at Carleton all the school houses have compost

bins which they sometimes actually use. That's good, right? Right?

All this information and more is located on their website. A website, I might add, which is an accomplishment in and of itself. It's beautifully laid out, easy to follow, and inspiring to read.

If nothing else, it raises awareness of an environmental ethic that I think we could use a lot more on our own campus. I suggest you all check it out at www.stolaf.edu/green.

Matt Kirby is a member of the class of 2007.