

## Help Make UPEI Green

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Contributor

The other week I attended the Energy Awareness Fair at our university, where I was encouraged to meet many people devoted to helping the environment. I was happy to learn that last year, with the aid of a government grant, UPEI replaced most of its lighting with the new ultra-efficient T-8 fluorescent bulbs. This is one simple and significant step we all can take to conserve energy, money, and the environment. I was also pleased to find the University's Environmental Society there, represented by member Soon Cherng, showing students how they can help the environment by reducing water consumption.

The resounding message I took with me from the fair is this: *Education is key in changing the way we live and preventing the further destruction of our planet.* Governments are not likely to pass laws obliging people to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Therefore, it is up to those who understand the importance of doing so to teach others and set the example. In this regard, I feel there is more our university could be doing to help:

- Sadly, this university does not recycle or compost the bulk of of its reusable and biodegradable waste. The vast majority of garbage bins around campus are multi-receptacles, with no separate bins for recyclables and biodegradable materials. (And no, janitors do not sort through these bins and pick out the recyclables.) As a result, huge quantities of recyclable material is wasted by UPEI every year.
- UPEI is also shamefully short of separate recycling receptacles

for paper. Paper is an easy thing to recycle, and something that universities go through large amounts of every day. What gives? Even at my crummy old high school there were recycling receptacles for paper in the corner of every classroom!

- Recycling stations should be clearly marked (with illustrations), so that students without time to stop and think about whether a Tim Horton's coffee cup is recycling, compost or waste have a clear idea of what goes where.
- A major issue, and one I understand the Environmental Society has been trying to do something about, is the use of non-recyclable, non-biodegradable containers in the University cafeteria. What bothers me most about this is that there are now inexpensive alternatives available. A bowl made from cornstarch, for example, costs only a few pennies more than one made from styrofoam.
- What the University should do, before renewing its contract with Chartwells (our current food service provider), is require the company to come up with a plan for how to reduce its impact on the environment. Some great ideas to suggest might be: the use of biodegradable takeaway containers; the replacement of old kitchen appliances with energy-star appliances; the use

**Continued on page 19**

## Lethargically at Large

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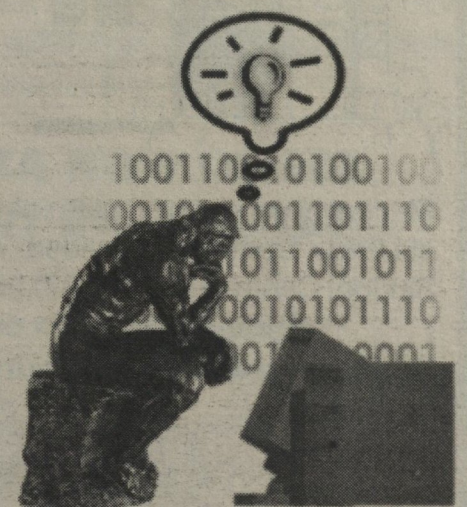
Have you noticed how our culture has become vandalized with advertisements? Cities are plastered with posters; magazines are consumed with ads, television with commercials, even our streets with signs and billboards. I can't even check my e-mail anymore without being harassed by pop-up ads and junk mail. Of course we are all used to it by now, we have been exposed to it our whole lives, but now that you have thought about it doesn't it make you kind of sick?

Large companies are spending millions upon millions of dollars on advertisement campaigns while at the same time exploiting poorer nations for their natural resources and cheap labor. It would seem natural to assume that all of this money spent on advertisements could go toward more ethical use, like paying workers fair wages for one thing.

In today's society it would seem that it is our own pursuit of material gain that is fueling these advertisements. I know that wearing those new \$120.00 Nikes while washing down your Big Mac with a Coca-Cola makes one feel good, but that is exactly what the advertisements we are exposed to on a daily basis want us to feel. We support these corrupt companies by repeatedly giving into their bombardment of advertisements.

The facts about these corrupt methods employed by many large companies are out there. They are available to us, but we choose to disregard them. This "If I can't see it, it's not there" syndrome is becoming one of the chronic issues in our society. We know better than this and should not sit idle while this goes on right in front of us, let alone contribute our support of the products.

We do have a choice. We do have the power to decide where our money gets spent. Investing our money in fairly traded goods and supporting ethical responsible companies that do not engage in shady operations is one place to start. The biggest obstacle for most of us to get over: our own laziness. Sitting around giving into everything that is put in front of us will only dig us deeper into the hole we are already in. We must be pro-active with the choices we make. As the saying goes, "We must live simply, so that all may simply live."



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