

The Campus Environment

By Natalie Pendergast

According to David Mackay of the Environmental Coalition of Canada, the issue of our world's declining ecological status has not just disappeared simply because some of us don't have time for it.

"[Students should] become

spoken to about the issue are the ones who bring him hope.

"You have got to be pessimistic about the destruction of the environment, but when I talk to young people who are working on environmental issues I'm hopeful because there's a lot of will to work

'Green Pledge' that these universities are taking, with the help of their student union. That's something I thought UPEI might be interested in."

Mackay knows that students are busy and may not have time to get involved in such a time-consuming program, but he thinks there are ways people can make a difference in their day to day lifestyles without joining a committee.

"I think the most important thing is to think when [students] are buying a product, where that product is produced, how it was produced, whether it was produced under fair conditions for the workers, whether it involves a lot of energy use, and whether it's made out of recycled packaging."

Mackay said that when people are buying a product, they have a choice as to what they are spending their money on. People have the freedom to stop and ask themselves whether they are paying for something of a means they agree with. Everyone, as Mackay puts it, "has a vote with their loonie."

Another thing students can do, according to Mackay, is buy non-bleached, post-consumer recycled paper. "There are a lot of trees cut down," he said. "If you look at how a piece of paper is made, there's a lot of producing and manufacturing that is destructive to the environment."

In that aspect, UPEI is doing something to help the situation with the use of blue bins.

There are approximately fifty bins and they are situated in the majority of buildings based on the occupancy and the use of the building. This allows the bins to be emptied on campus rather than transporting them individually to

Synpro, who recycles the paper, to be emptied.

Neil Henry, Vice President Finance and Facilities, was unavailable for comment.

Dianne MacLean, his secretary, explained that the bins were originally intended for office use around campus, as the majority of recyclable paper comes from these areas. Therefore, she said, "Awareness of the blue bins has been focused to the office users, but the availability and awareness to other potential users will expand as the recycling program continues to evolve."

Mackay feels the recycle bins are a good start, but he thinks that soon the university will be doing more. "[UPEI] will be doing more as a part of Island Waste Watch, which will be a separation of all material waste and organics similar to what Prince County has been doing."

Peter Forbes, a fifth year Arts student, liked the Island Waste Watch idea, "I think it's a good idea. I've seen it employed in other provinces and it seems to be catching on. It's becoming more of a mainstream thing to do, which is good because it's saving the environment."

Forbes feels frustrated because when he needs to throw out his recyclables, at times there are no blue bins around, only trash cans. "I find more trash cans around, therefore I use more trash cans."

Forbes thinks that the only way to get students more active in preserving the environment is to set up a Waste Watch program.

Island Waste Watch hopes to install it's program in Queen's County within the next two years.



Always remember to recycle your Rude Mechanicals.

more aware of the environment because we are part of the environment and our lives are supported through the ecosystem and environment," said MacKay. Although he is concerned about the health of our earth, he feels it is the youth of today who will really be affected in the future.

"From everything I read and all the research I do, things are looking very pessimistic," Mackay said. If he were a student today, Mackay explained he would feel negatively toward the state of the environment, but, as he put it, "I always say, 'I'm pessimistic but I'm hopeful.'"

Mackay explained that some of the young people he has

together and turn things around."

At the same time, Mackay stressed that he is worried about the students who are not yet at that stage, the majority of young people are not as aware as they could be because of their view of the earth. "I think part of it is our mindset of believing that the world - the earth - is invincible, he said, "that it's an infinite amount of resources, but now we've realized over the last ten years that the earth is indeed finite."

Mackay feels there is hope for UPEI. "A lot of universities have a program where graduating students make a commitment not to work for any companies that are destroying the earth. There's a