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Finding pathways to sustainable communities

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Finding pathways to sustainable communities

Imagine a restaurant that pays living wages, uses organic produce, generates wind-powered electricity, donates 20 percent of its profits to charities, and whose owner refuses to make more money than five times as much as the lowest-paid employee. Although this seems utopian, it's reality. On Oct. 15 Judy Wicks, the owner of the White Dog Café in Philadelphia, which has been awarded as a model for sustainable development, will speak about her business at the Hannah Community Center in East Lansing.

The lecture series sponsored by the Michigan State University Office of Campus Sustainability and the University Committee for a Sustainable Campus carries the theme, "Pathways to Sustainable Communities." Defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," the term "sustainable development" was originally coined in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development as the new global goal for economic progress.

Every Wednesday through Nov. 15 from 4 to 5.30 p.m. this lecture series will feature distinguished speakers. With the exception of the White Dog Café event, all lectures will be held in room 223 of MSU's Natural Resources Building, at the intersection of Farm Lane and Wilson.

The topics covered include ecology, alternative views to corporate globalization, sustainable business concepts and even higher education. On Oct. 22, Debbie Rowe, a professor at Oakton Community College, will discuss "The Higher Purpose of Higher Ed □ Choices We Can and Must Make."

One week later, Thomas Princen, the author of "Confronting Consumption" (2002), will explore the progression "From Efficiency to Sufficiency." An associate professor of International Natural Resources and Environmental Policy at University of Michigan, Princen has recently completed a five-year, multidisciplinary project on the problem of over consumption in the "North," and alternatives to it.

On Nov. 5, Harold Glasser, an assistant professor of Environmental Studies at Western Michigan University, will discuss "Learning Our Way to a Sustainable and Desirable World: Some Ideas Inspired by Arne Naess and Deep Ecology."

The final lecture of the series will be Nov. 19, when Thomas Gladwin, a professor of Corporate Strategy and International Business at the University of Michigan will speak about "Envisioning Sustainable Enterprise."

For more information, contact Terry Link, (517) 355-1751, www.ecofoot.msu.edu.

□ Daniel Sturm

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