THE ENVIRONMENTAL ENQUIRER

NEW YEAR, SAME MISSION

By Luke Waugh (Grade 12)

Edgewood High School

Edgewood's Environmental Club has been active this first quarter! We have pioneered many projects this first quarter, and I could not be happier with the efforts of the members. First, the club is nearing the implementation of battery recycling sites in each of the schools on the Edgewood campus! This is a great initiative to encourage sustainable practices among the Edgewood staff and students. Secondly, with the donations from many RBBCSC families, we are diligently repurposing plastic grocery bags. Club members are dedicating time to weaving these bags into sleeping mats for the homeless population in Bloomington. Led by our Community Outreach Group, this project significantly reduces waste while benefiting our community. Finally, our ongoing efforts to raise environmental awareness are demonstrated through monthly newsletters, promotional posters within the high school, and social media content. We look forward to another quarter of serving the community and promoting sustainable environmental practices.

Syrup holder made from plastic lids

Photo from Mrs. Myers

STAFF INTERVIEW

By Gabby Buckley (Grade 12)

Last year, members of the environmental club collected plastic bottle caps for the ILC, but most people don't know what happened to them after that. The Innovative Learning Center (ILC) has started utilizing bottle caps to help make products for the ILC design shop. Using multiple machines, the plastic is broken down into molds or slabs, which are put through different design processes to make products. The ILC has already used these bottle caps to make a coffee syrup holder for the Coffee Corral, and the design of a bench, pieces of a board game, and so much more are in progress. The lead of this new innovative process is Mrs. Wilson, who not only started this program but has also involved every intern working there in this process. This is one of Edgewood's most important steps toward a more environmentally conscious culture.

STUDENT INTERVIEW

By: Hannah Clark (Grade 11)

This week, I decided to meet with Benjamin Wooden, a senior at EHS. Wooden said, "My favorite thing about environmental club is probably how organized it is. What I mean is that the leaders have divided tasks into different task forces, and we are able to work more efficiently than if we all worked on the same projects. This also allows people to join who maybe don't know how they can help, but have videography or social skills—which we can put to use in our social media group. That's just one example.

A future impact that I want to see for the club is that we would be able to expand our agenda outside of mostly Edgewood applications. I think it would be amazing for us to be able to partner with some more outside organizations. One way I think this would be cool is if we were able to help clean up state parks and nature reserves in Indiana."

Photo from Benjamin Wooden

AI photo of what the park is planned to look like

Photo by the Ellettsville Heritage Center

MONROE COUNTY NEWS

By Chrislyn Miller (Grade 12)

The city of Ellettsville is currently undergoing some changes in landscaping. Expected to be completed by December 2024, Stewart Park is planned to be used as a gathering space, music venue, dog park, and even a connection to the Heritage Trail. To do so, the barn that lies in the middle of the park will be renovated into an amphitheater. The benefits from this project not only stop at a new venue for public performances and a dog park, “The center’s interior will include meeting rooms, a networking area, a kitchen, restrooms, a 15-foot stage, and utilities (electric, water, and Wi-Fi).” With the creation of Stewart Park, Ellettsville citizens can look forward to memorable events, notable performances, and a stronger, more connected community.

STATE-WIDE NEWS

By Meri Crowe (Grade 12)

25,000 miles of Indiana’s rivers have been labeled unusable for recreational use due to their contamination. This severe pollution issue is causing many residents of Indiana distress and they wonder when their rivers will return to normal. Luckily, The Hoosier Environmental Council is working diligently to address the current issues causing water pollution: industrial activities, agricultural runoff, and wastewater discharge. Because of these issues, many wetland areas in Indiana fail to meet the standards of the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act, “establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters”(EPA). A necessary item to achieve these standards is the state's compliance with the federal government’s water protection regulations. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is working to restore wetlands to their non-polluted glory. Additionally, Riparian forest buffers filter out many pollutants before they reach rivers and lakes. Because of these actions to improve our rivers and lakes; there is hope for our environmental future.

Photo Credit: Actium / Shutterstock

Three Mile Island nuclear power plant

Constellation

NATIONAL NEWS

Kylie Miller (Grade 10)

A U.S. nuclear power plant is reinstating a nuclear reactor after a partial meltdown in 1979. The power plant on Three Mile Island in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania is reinstating their nuclear reactor two and there are many different opinions on the matter. Local activism groups are fighting the reinstatement of the reactor because of environmental and safety concerns. Meanwhile, local businesses and business trades are in support of the reactor. The NRC has to do a complete environmental assessment before the project can be continued.

GLOBAL NEWS

By: Xander Frye & Addy Hash (Grade 12)

Researchers at the Polytechnic University of Catalunya in Spain have recently created a sustainable battery device to store solar power. Many normal batteries are made of unsustainable materials like lithium and tend to overheat. This new battery is based on specific molecules of carbon, hydrogen, and nitrogen (all common elements) that can change shape when contacted by sunlight and chemically transform the molecules into energy. The energy can be stored for up to 18 years and doesn't overheat, equaling more efficiency. Further work needs to be done to scale up these batteries before they can be used to upgrade real-life solar setups.

Researchers in Spain working on their new hybrid solar battery device.

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