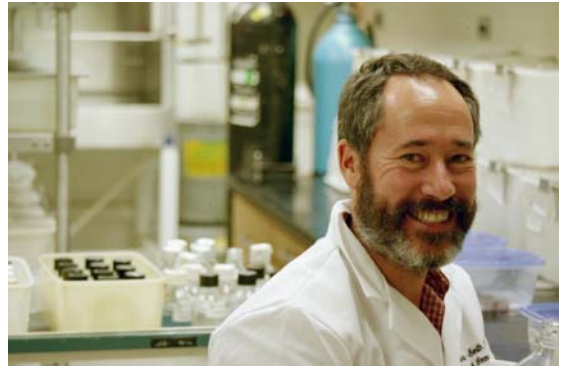




## 2008 Newsletter

### Message from the Director

The Focus the Nation Climate Change Teach-in was the highlight for the Environmental Studies Program this year (See story page 2). The event was organized by a steering committee of faculty and students from across campus, with the ENVS program playing a key role. Our new faculty member, Glenn Fieldman, and I were committee co-chairs; office coordinator Courtney Rump handled the substantial administrative and financial work; ENVS student assistant Woody Hastings put together the elected officials panel, organized poster hanging and much more; ENVS special major graduate student Karen Nyhus did an extraordinary job coordinating logistics; ECO Students put together a student panel; and on the days of the event ENVS students were the backbone of student volunteers doing everything from staffing the sign-in desk to running the laptops and projectors. ENVS associated faculty Karen Grove (Geosciences), Sheldon Gen (Public Administration), and Andrew Oliphant (Geography) served on the steering committee; organized panels, the carbon footprint calculators, and visual carbon display; acted as emcees; and much more. All together SFSU Focus the Nation was a year in planning and an amazing team effort. We would like to thank SFSU President Robert Corrigan for his strong personal and financial support for the teach-in, and also Dean Joel Kassiola, Dean Sheldon Axler, and Jerry Eisman for their support. For a full list of acknowledgements see the SFSU Focus the Nation website at <http://bss.sfsu.edu/envstudies/climate.html>.



This semester I have had the pleasure of working with the campus Facilities Department on two sustainability projects. I am teaching a new campus sustainability course (ENVS 570) with the support of Facilities Director Robert Hutson, and with help of Campus Grounds Director Phil Evans and Recycling Coordinator Caitlin Fager. Caitlin and I and the class are working on a first ever greenhouse gas inventory for the campus. The inventory satisfies a commitment the University made last spring when SFSU President Robert Corrigan signed the University and College Presidents Climate Commitment. Thank you to Robert, Phil, and Caitlin for your support of the ENVS Program and campus sustainability.

As always, the Environmental Studies Program benefits from the help of faculty in many other departments. I would like to thank our concentration advisors: Nancy (Sami) Reist, Barbara Holzman, Dean Joel Kassiola, Raquel Pinderhughes, Karen Grove, and Pete Palmer.

Thank you, Carlos Davidson

# Focus the Nation on Climate Change

Wow! With over a dozen panels and presentations ranging from climate science to global environmental justice and campus sustainability activism, appearances from President Corrigan and Speaker of the House of Representatives Rep. Nancy Pelosi (via video link), a rousing keynote speech by Green for All founder Van Jones, an evening dedicated to Native peoples on the climate change front lines—and a total of 4000 attendees over two days—SFSU’s Focus the Nation teach-in on climate was a rousing success.

Focus the Nation’s national organizers have a great deal to be proud of, with over 1800 Focus the Nation events nationwide. Over a million people attended and were educated, motivated, and inspired. We’re happy to have been part of Focus the Nation, and with the demonstrated commitment of the SFSU campus community to meeting the climate challenge.

Thousands more Bay Area listeners heard interviews and events on KPFA radio, which broadcast an entire day of the event. (If there’s anything you missed or would like to see again, streaming video is now available at <http://bss.sfsu.edu/envstudies/media.html>). Dozens of people calculated their carbon footprints with SFSU’s very own “house” calculator, wrote letters to their elected representatives, and viewed educational posters prepared by SFSU students. Hundreds got a chance to see auto carbon emissions made visible through the “black balloon” exhibit, and heard local, state and university policymakers and officials explain a range of institutional responses to the climate challenge.

The demand for action on climate change is growing, with new organizations springing up every day (check out [www.350.org](http://www.350.org), for example, which is now recruiting interns). SFSU students and faculty are part of that groundswell. A half-dozen students have contacted their Congressional representatives and sought appointments, and others made campus activism a theme of SFSU’s Earth Day celebration. Faculty, staff and administration are working to reduce SFSU greenhouse gas emissions, and are working on climate-protection efforts in Bay Area cities. And not a moment too soon. Scientific studies and analyses released since the beginning of 2008 underline the urgency of prompt and decisive action. The rapid disintegration of ice sheets in the Antarctic highlights that the time to act is now.

## Awards and Honors

This year the ENVS program has a new scholarship: the Yvette Michaud Leadership Award in Environmental Studies. The first recipient is **Adrienne Eliza Aquino**. Adrienne designed a poster for SFSU Focus the Nation and designed the T-shirts for the national Focus the Nation campaign. Adrienne describes her background and goals: I was born and raised in the Bay Area, and aspire to act locally. Ideally, I would like to apply my skills as a graphic designer to environmental communication. I have a strong interest in environmental justice and hope to become more involved with the movement. I see a strong correlation between effective communication and positive action and would like to use this knowledge to bring attention to environmental problems.



The Yvette Michaud Student Leadership Award is given each fall to an Environmental Studies major who demonstrates leadership in environmental causes that actively engage the campus and/or the wider community. Yvette Michaud graduated summa cum laude from the ENVS program in 2007 and was a leader in ECO-Students. She worked with Student Center staff to phase in composting as part of their waste management practices. The Leadership Award was created by an anonymous donor to encourage student environmental activism and leadership and to honor Yvette’s leadership.



**Rick Sakow** was this year’s recipient of the George Feliz Memorial Scholarship. Rick writes: “I have been involved in the environmental and social activist arena since high-school, when I began working with the nation's most widely heard pirate radio station, Free Radio San Diego. At 16 I worked for the County of San Diego’s, Department of Environmental Health, Watershed Protection Program protecting water quality. Thanks to the ENVIS Internship Program at SF State, I am currently working for the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency in the Clean Water Act Compliance Office where I am an inspector and compliance officer. I am currently applying for the masters program in Environmental Management at USF.”

The George Feliz Memorial Scholarship in Environmental Studies is awarded each fall to an Environmental Studies major. George Feliz was SFSU’s first dean of graduate studies, and was instrumental in helping San Francisco State evolve from a teacher's college to a university. Professor Feliz donated an endowment fund to support a scholarship for Environmental Studies majors with financial need.

Each year the ENVIS Program selects an honoree for the Honors Convocation. The honoree must have earned a high GPA, but the selection also honors broader achievements such as contributions to environmental work. This year's honoree is **Denise Rivas**. Denise is a recent transfer student from Santa Monica College. Denise writes: “I am a returning student and the first in my family to attend college. I did my internship with the National Park Service where I worked on energy conservation outreach and a CFL bulb exchange. We reduced the Golden Gate National Recreation Area energy bill which garnered a hefty sum of money that now goes to environmental programs. Upon graduating, I plan to return to the Los Angeles area and work on water issues, especially conservation.”



The ENVIS program would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Environmental Studies students who applied for our awards and also thank Courtney Rump, ENVIS office coordinator, and Professors Glenn Fieldman, Carlos Davidson, and Jane DeWitt (Chemistry) for serving on the selection committee.

## Study Abroad Highlights

**The ENVIS program strongly encourages majors to consider studying abroad. It’s great to get the perspective from outside the U.S. on environmental issues. Check out our new study abroad section on the department web page at <http://bss.sfsu.edu/envstudies/travel.html>.**

### **Christine Osorio (ESS)**

I'm in Hong Kong studying at City University of Hong Kong. My classes include: corporate social responsibility, globalization and the environment, Hong Kong politics, and women and development. It's great finding out what my peers think about the environment and they certainly think that government plays an important role in sustainability. The school has programs which include 'no plastic bag' days; however, the security guards still yell at me for bringing my bike into the dorm, so there's definitely room for improvement here. But in a city where cars rule the streets, I've met up with a group of people that love riding bikes. Of course, this city has amazing public transportation, so the much preferred choice for older people is still rail. I've met people with really innovative ideas and gotten a feel of what the Hong Kong perspective is on the environment.

### **Barbara Beth (NRMC)**

This past year Barbara has been studying abroad in Paris, France under SFSU’s study abroad program in order to improve her French speaking skills and contribute to her French degree. Once Barbara is finished with her studies at SFSU, she will pursue a degree in Environmental Law and Foreign policy or International Relations with the goal to work in the field of International and Regional Environmental Conservation and Environmental Foreign Policy. Her life purpose is to contribute to changing the way people see the world, not as a commodity, but as a finite planet filled with biodiversity that must be protected. She wants to help educate humanity, changing our values and create and change policy for the advantage of environmental, animal, and social justice.

# News on Current Students and Alums

**Andrew Georgeades** (NRMC 2005) is currently with the California Native Plant Society as lead staff on the CNPS/CA DF&G Vegetation Program and other projects.

**Michelle Matranga** (ESSJ 2005) is a graduate student at SF State in the Geography department and a full time parent. I had a baby boy in November of 2006. He is now 15 months old.

## ENVS Alum in the News: Jessica Tovar

ENVS alum Jessica Tovar is in the thick of it – a high stakes battle in Richmond, California, pitting Chevron Oil Company’s desire to expand its operations against local community opposition. Jessica is a community organizer with Citizens for a Better Environment, which is leading local opposition.

Our dependence on oil hits home for people and communities that face the immediate health and environmental consequences of oil extraction and refining operations, from Ecuador and the Niger Delta to cities here in the Bay Area. For them, oil companies are politically powerful players that often dominate local politics and economies—and whose hazardous emissions are unpleasant facts of life.

At issue are Chevron’s plans to retool its Richmond refinery operations. Some fear that Chevron may be gearing up to process heavy, tarry crude originating in Alberta’s tar sands, and that such changes would have adverse consequences for those who live in the refinery’s shadow. Chevron denies such intentions, but some comments it made in the past about wanting to refine “a wider range” of crude have led to uncertainty about its intentions. Communities for a Better Environment wants Chevron to rewrite and resubmit its EIR and make full disclosure.

Much of Jessica’s work involves empowering the community through education, on the one hand, and helping to present community concerns to decision makers and the broader public on the other. She has taught “Refineries 101” to groups in churches, schools, and neighborhoods, so that people better understand what goes on within the maze of tanks, towers, and pipes. With the assistance of CBE’s staff scientist and attorney, she translates technical and legal language into understandable English. Richmond, which is home to 400 industrial facilities, has a high incidence of asthma and cancer. Jessica helps give voice to residents’ health concerns and their objections to refinery operations like flaring, and she ferrets out answers to their questions. She encourages them to participate in public hearings. In March Jessica was a guest on KQED radio’s “Forum” program with Michael Krasny where she debated a Chevron official.

Asked about how her ENVS education prepared her for her work, she says that she especially values the program’s broad and holistic approach to “the environment” and “environmentalism”—an approach that requires understanding of the economic, public health, and conservation dimensions.



## ECO Students Update

**ECO Students is a student club on campus working on environmental issues. Their mission statement is: To empower students with the opportunities and resources needed in order to contribute to the environmental movement on campus and in our SF community through implementation of campaigns and working projects in efforts to make the SFSU campus more sustainable.**



ECO Students has had an amazing year! Composting is now available to all students in the West Plaza of Cesar Chavez Student Center. Our battery recycling program has been institutionalized and SF State now has a program to collect batteries for recycling. Every Day is Earth Day, especially the stuff swap, last October was very popular. Our Earth Day celebration this April was filled with great speakers, beautiful art, a vegan cooking demonstration, organizations tabling, and a guided nature walk around campus. Our first ever Bike to School Day last fall was a tremendous success! It grew even larger this semester. Over 18 other campuses across California joined us in biking to school on April 24th. We had close to 200 bicycles parked in the quad (a sight to be seen), workshops, free food, free bike gear, free repairs, and group rides to and from campus. We also fit in a little extra fun time with hikes and socials.

Next semester we will be continuing our composting efforts and organizing Every Day is Earth Day and Bike to School Day events. Additionally, San Francisco State University has been selected to be the first CSU to host the California Student Sustainability Coalition's Fall Convergence - a statewide gathering of hundreds of students from CCC's, UC's, CSU's, and private universities from across California!

We are particularly proud of the fact that Bike to School Day empowered one lucky person to lower their carbon footprint and get out of her car and on to a bicycle. Sara Wang won a bicycle, lock, and helmet (donated by Ocean Cyclery) in exchange for committing to go car-free for a year and writing a blog about her experience! Congratulations Sara!!!

To join or for more information check out <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sfsuecostudents/> or contact Suzanne McNulty at [smcnulty@sfsu.edu](mailto:smcnulty@sfsu.edu) or Marielle Earwood at [mbearwood@hotmail.com](mailto:mbearwood@hotmail.com).

## Faculty Spotlight

### Interviews and News on Faculty Participating in the ENVS Program

#### An Interview with Sheldon Gen, Assistant Professor of Public Administration

**Sheldon's research is on the social aspects of environmental policy: how humans place value on environmental amenities, how we make collective decisions affecting the environment, and the behavioral responses to our physical environment. His research has appeared in *Environment & Behavior*, *Environmental Practice*, *Health & Place*, *Public Works Management & Policy*, and the *American Review of Public Administration*. In 1997 he won the EPA's Excellence Award for his work on wastewater issues in San Diego and Tijuana. He holds a BS and license in civil engineering, an MPA, and a PhD in public policy.**



*How did you first become interested in environmentalism and environmental policy?*

My career in environmental issues began as a civil engineer. I worked mainly on basic infrastructure projects: water resources, sanitation systems, and some transportation and land planning projects. As my career advanced, I found myself working less on the engineering side of these projects and more on the policy side. This was an aspect of environmentalism that was new to me, mysterious, and fascinating. It didn't abide by laws of the natural sciences, but resided in messy social and political contexts. It frustrated me not to understand that side of environmental issues, or know how to work in it, so I went back to school and got a Ph.D. in public policy. I found the subject so interesting that I haven't left it yet.

*Tell us more about your career path. Where have you worked? What interesting projects and issues have you worked on?*

I've worked for many public agencies and private organizations, some of which you might not guess have anything to do with environmental issues. For example, I did some work for the Department of Defense on ecosystem management. What does the military have to do with ecosystem management? It turns out that the Department of Defense owns the most biologically diverse lands in the US, home to more threatened and endangered species than any other land owner. The Department of Defense recognized this situation and their responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act, so they adopted policies to manage their lands in ways that protect their diversity.

For the Department of State and the EPA, I worked on a wastewater treatment system for Tijuana, Mexico. NAFTA induced incredible growth in Tijuana, making it the fastest growing city on the entire Pacific Rim. Its growth outstripped the capacity of its wastewater system, and the result was raw sewage along the Tijuana-San Diego shores. When the two countries agreed to increase capacity by building a new treatment plant on the US side of the border, the US proposed to recycle the effluent for irrigation and other non-consumptive uses. But Mexico objected, claiming that they owned the water rights to the sewage. I had never thought about water rights on sewage, but as water sources become scarcer I suspect we will see more of these cases.

*You spent some time with the Peace Corps in Kenya in the early 1990s. Do you have anything you would like to share from that experience?*

My years in Kenya brought me face to face with the environment versus economy debate. I often questioned whether environmental issues were legitimate pursuits in a place where abject poverty denies people basic necessities. But I eventually learned that the debate is really a false dichotomy. The environment and the economy do not have to be competing goals in a zero-sum game in which the advance of one comes at the expense of the other.

*You've had an interesting career, working for many different agencies and organizations. What advice can you give to ENVS students on the job market?*

One of my college roommates was an avid environmentalist. When he graduated, he was recruited by a major power plant. They offered him a generous salary, but he could hardly stand the idea of working for a power plant that he considered to be a major local polluter. When he asked me for my opinion, I said the power plant is exactly the place for him to work because they are in dire need of environmentalists. He took the job and today he directs the plant's environmental compliance efforts. I think it's natural for ENVS students to dream of working for environmental champions like Greenpeace, the Sierra Club, or even the EPA. On the other hand, students sometimes think of industry employers as the enemy because of the environmental damage caused by their operations, and taking jobs with them is tantamount to selling their souls to the devil. But to me, those are the places that I hope our ENVS students go to work, because their impact will be much greater.

*You were very much involved in organizing and participating in SFSU's Focus the Nation effort. Why are you interested in this issue and why do you think it is important for students to be aware of it?*

Global warming is not just the most important environmental issue we face today. I think it is the most important social issue we face, because what we do today – good or bad – will affect the planet's inhabitants for generations to come. The spatial and temporal scales of the impacts are boggling. I can think of no other social issue that carries that level of consequence.

*What projects are you working on these days?*

In March I presented a paper looking at San Franciscan's perceptions of environmental justice. It's based upon contract work I recently did for the SF Public Utilities Commission. I'm currently working on a paper that looks at 40 years of environmental impact statements under the National Environmental Policy Act.

*You grew up working in your parent's restaurant, love good food and good restaurants and have several recommendations on your website. Do you have any suggestions for restaurants in San Francisco for those concerned about the environmental impacts of what they eat?*

A new restaurant that I am excited about is Fish & Farm, on Taylor Street, near the Theater District. It takes a localvore's approach to eating, using local, seasonal, organic ingredients to make simple, satisfying farm dishes. The wait staff there are true believers too, happy to explain the origins of your meal and the virtues of eating locally. But the place is not just good in the category of environmentally friendlier restaurants. To me, it makes its mark among *all* restaurants by creating richly flavorful dishes with few, everyday ingredients. Unlike the recommendations I have on my website, Fish & Farm is not cheap. But it's a good pick to impress your date with your taste for food and environmental consciousness. Its dining room is stylish but limited in capacity, so make reservations.

## Faculty News

### **Tendai Chitewere**

#### **Assistant Professor of Liberal Studies**

I am a cultural anthropologist, and my research interests are in consumption and environmentalism, and the emergence of green technology and green consumerism. I recently gave talks at the University of Michigan's Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative, Conference for Environmental Justice and at the Humanities and Technology Association's annual meeting where I was elected to the board. I am currently teaching ENVS 392: Nature, Culture, and Technology.



### **Carlos Davidson**

#### **Associate Professor and Program Director of Environmental Studies**

I recently published papers on amphibian population declines in *Ecological Applications*, and *Environmental Science and Technology*. I am currently studying the concentration of amphibian population declines in mountains on a global scale, and pesticide residues in frogs in the Cascades and Sierra Nevada. This spring I have been teaching a new course, ENVS 570 Campus Sustainability. The course has been a joint effort with facilities management. I am currently working with students in the course and Caitlin Fager, campus recycling coordinator, on a first ever greenhouse gas inventory for the campus.

### **Glenn Fieldman**

#### **Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies**

I have had productive first-year as an ENVS assistant professor. As FTN co-chair and organizer of a number of panels and exhibits, I was kept hopping during the Fall semester (when not "chained" to my laptop responding to FTN e-mail.) This spring, along with teaching, I have concentrated on writing (with co-author Paul Baer) an article submitted to *The Cambridge Review of International Affairs* and a paper for the International Studies Association annual meeting, both on international climate politics. I have also given community presentations, briefed now-Congresswoman Jackie Speier on climate change and climate policy, and was appointed by the Brisbane City Council to its advisory Open Space and Ecology Committee.

(Continued on next page...)

## **Logan Hennessy**

**Assistant Professor of Liberal Studies**



I am a political ecologist and my research focuses on the intersection of environmental history, the mining and oil industries, and social movements of indigenous peoples. I have conducted fieldwork in Ecuador and Guyana, working closely with local communities and organizations, and I am currently studying “good neighbor” contracts between mining companies and indigenous communities. I also work with local and international environmental organizations, including Pacific Environment and the Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA). This semester I am teaching an interdisciplinary class on forests and working with the class to create a self-guided walking tour of the trees on the SFSU campus.

## **Joel Kassiola**

**Dean of the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences**

I have been working on the environment and Chinese development for the past two years having made two visits to China and delivered lectures to various official and academic audiences. Now, I am working on a Green Confucian political theory that would Confucianize modernity and its flawed values and social practices and modernize Confucianism. I am delivering papers on this topic at the Western Political Science Association meeting and at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Chinese Political Studies in Hong Kong.