Earth Jam blends environmentalism, entertainment

T. Michael Boddie
@THEHUMANBODDIE

Greene Street went green as students gathered to promote environmental sustainability through crafts and activities at Earth Jam on Tuesday. The event also marked the announcement of a new partnership between USC and the Bio4Edu program.

Put together annually by Sustainable Carolina, Earth Jam is a street fair that celebrates Earth Day and advocates for sustainability. Students had the opportunity to try out Segways, blend their own smoothies via bicycle energy and sign a sustainability pledge.

The USC EcoReps, partnered with Sustainable Carolina, attended Earth Jam to promote their organization as well as the sustainability cause itself. They also are partnered with Rock the Bike, the company that can direct bicycle pedaling energy to an attached blender. USC EcoRep and third-year nursing student Keiva Newman was representing the EcoReps and working with the blender bike.

Travel Lightly showcases sustainability

Emily Grace Mewborne
@EMILYRISA

This Earth Day was representative of a larger environmental movement that is sweeping USC and the surrounding community.

Many students, staff and members of the University of South Carolina community have made efforts to leave their car behind in favor of walking, biking or public transportation.

This week was Earth Fest, a celebration focused on how our food choices affect global warming, the environment and our health. Activities include workshops, lectures and other events focused on food systems and combining healthy eating habits with environmentally sustainable living habits.

Mary Ramsey
@MCOLLEEN1996

USC joins with Handshake

Emily Barber
@EMILYRISA

USC’s Career Center is switching to a new career management program called Handshake starting in June.

Handshake will kick off Wednesday with schedule appointments and register for career-building events. The program will be available beginning June 1. The university previously used JobMate as its career guidance platform. Any student who currently has an account on JobMate will automatically have one on Handshake, but any resumes and documents on JobMate will not be transferred to the new platform. They will not be available after May 30.

Any concerns or questions can be directed to the Career Center.

USC graduate wins second Pulitzer Prize

Mary Ramsey
@MCOLLEEN1996

A University of South Carolina alumnus was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, one of the highest accolades for writing in the world, on Monday.

Michael LaForgia won the Pulitzer Prize for local reporting in 2014. This is his second Pulitzer Prize in three years, having won previously in the category of local reporting in 2012. LaForgia joined the Times in 2012 following a stint with The Tampa Bay Times.

Travel Lightly Day encouraged students and other city dwellers to leave their car in the garage for a while and celebrate alternative transportation.

The celebration was held all day Monday on Greene Street as a partner event to Earth Jam. Organizations lined up tables on Greene Street to inform students about how they are working to create a better way of living for Columbia and USC’s campus.

Michael Juras, a member of the Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee, stood behind the BPAC table and shared what the organization calls the Master Plan.

“We are here to sort of promote what the Walk Bike Columbia Master Plan has recommended for the city in terms of pedestrian intersections and bicycle facility improvements,” Juras said, “to make the city a little bit more accessible to those who don’t want to use a car.”

All events are free to the students, staff and members of the community.
Columbia resident killed in three-car collision

The driver killed in a three-car accident on Interstate 77 Tuesday was found to not be wearing a seat belt by South Carolina Highway Patrol, the State reports. The driver was ejected from his SUV and later died of his injuries in a local hospital. He is believed to have lost control of his vehicle causing him to strike the side of another car that then hit a third car. The other two drivers were treated for injuries at Palmetto Health Richland, and the accident is still under investigation.

— Compiled by Mary Ramsey, News Editor

Columbia Museum of Art wins prestigious award

The Columbia Museum of Art was named one of 10 recipients of the National Medal for Museum and Library Service on Tuesday, The State reports. Its community involvement with charitable organizations such as St. Lawrence Place and Prosperity Project won it the award. It is one of five museums to win and the only art museum to take the prize in 2016. The museum will receive the award in June at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. The Richland Library was also named a finalist for the same award, but did not win.

— Compiled by Mary Ramsey, News Editor

School employee accused of stealing computer equipment worth over $4K

An Orangeburg County employee has been charged with grand larceny in connection with the theft of computer equipment from a local school, WIS reports. Matthew William Brunson, 25, is accused of stealing more than $4,500 in computers and equipment from the Brookdale School and attempting to resell the stolen goods. Brunson, who was a custodian at the Orangeburg Consolidated School District Fire school, has since been fired and is facing a $5,000 bond. Some of the equipment has been recovered.

— Compiled by Mary Ramsey, News Editor
One of Bio4Edu’s founders is South Carolina’s own Midlands Biofuels, a company that recycles vegetable oils. Fourth-year international studies student Caroline Wooburg is an associate of Midlands Biofuels and promoted USC’s new partnership. “Bio4Edu takes recycled vegetable oils from local businesses, restaurants and schools, turns it into biodiesel, sells it, and gives a portion of the proceeds back to the local school systems,” Wooburg said. Bio4Edu will be making a donation to Sustainable Carolina, as we have been donating our waste oil to Midlands Biofuels for some time now.

Both USC and local community organizations came together at the festivities to sustain their home planet and to educate others into the same direction.

Sustainable Page

Jurans said Columbia is one of the last major cities in the country to have this plan take place. The “Nipping Plan” includes bike lanes, buffer bike lanes and cycle tracks, all designated parts of the road to accommodate for bikes and pedestrian safety of students who walk around Columbia. He brought his own giant map to show the progress. “This map illustrates the sidewalk projects and bikeway projects that are in and around the University of South Carolina,” Jurans said. “These are projects that are scheduled to be put in or in progress for the next couple of years. They will in essence improve the quality of life here at USC and Richland County and in the city of Columbia.”

Buffy Gregory, the community mobilization coordinator for TPP, said they will not only focus directly on campus but also have plans to improve traffic flow around Williams-Briscoe Stadium during game days and increase safety of students who want to bike to campus. "Students walking through the event, such as first-year education student Meredith Funk, were pleased to see the efforts going into keeping them safer on campus and around the city. "I was glad to see this out here," Funk said. "Because campus is accommodating to pedestrians but some bikes get in the way going down small pathways during class change. They'll try to dodge you and it's not good."

After the Travel Lightly Day setups on Greene Street, students are more confident that efforts are being made to create better and safer ways to bike and walk around Columbia.

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**Spotlight: David O. Russell**

David O. Russell is a highly creative director who has, in recent years, established himself as a prominent filmmaker. While his earlier comedy films were well-received, his career reached new heights with his most recent films that made him a big-name director. Russell has proven his ability to create entertaining filmmaking with a range of genres and has been celebrated for the films he directed. His most recent film, "Silver Linings Playbook," was one of the first films to prove Russell's ability to create a highly emotional and impactful cinematic experience. Those familiar with Russell's career would consider his future work to be equally anticipated.

**Game design talks industry, gives advice for aspiring designers**

**William Ostdor**

Josh Hamrick, senior systems designer with Bethesda Game Studios, talked to The Daily Gamecock about his experience working on blockbuster games. In regards to his current work, Hamrick said that he works on a version of Fallout where the player gets the opportunity to work with the team on putting most of his effort into the game. It turns out lots of us were, and I hope, incredibly rewarding.

When asked what a senior systems designer as a game developer, Hamrick said that he works with the controller — how it feels in the player’s hands, the actions executed by a button on the screen. He has also been involved in the weapon design for "Fallout 4," and he worked on new features for the game, including assets like Sights and non-blooming recoil. Of course, he was using the Hunter Nightstalker class with the "Fallout 4" and "Talon King," said Hamrick. For "Fallout 4," "Fallout 4" was released close to five years ago, but that doesn’t mean that any of the team is resting on its laurels. If a team has a pretty good game, they’re going to be put on pause, the team got a few weeks off after years of hard work.

"By the time the game hit shelves, people were already back at work trying to develop new and awesome experiences in the world of "Fallout 4,"" Hamrick said. Recently, Hamrick has been working closely with the newer "Fallout 4" Survival mode, which makes the nuclear wasteland just as unforgiving as you would expect it to be.

"Personally, since almost my 1st day at BGS, I had been imagining a version of Fallout where the world would go out of its way to try and kill you," Hamrick said. "That surviving in the wasteland would be difficult and painful and, hopefully, incredibly rewarding. It turns out lots of it was, and I was given the opportunity to work with another seasoned designer to try and create an experience that would do that."

Although Hamrick works on games, he still finds time to play the same games that other people are excited about. He said that a long list of games he is playing currently includes "Skyrim," which Hamrick has been playing "Dark Souls III" since it was released on April 12, and will be "for the foreseeable future." He said that "Dark Souls" is his favorite game of all-time, and that its rough gameplay and unforgiving gameplay is part of what made him want to make a game for "Fallout 4." The game continues to inspire him to try and create games that push and persuade the player in a fun way.

"Shifting the focus to aspiring designers, there’s a lot of advice for those wanting to make games," Hamrick said. "Make them," Hamrick said. "Seriously, there are enough free tools and information in your fingertips that there is no excuse not to. If you want it, make it do. And there are also plenty of schools that would love to help you achieve those goals ... Make something. The games you need exists now." Hamrick didn’t go to school for game design until after he was already married and had a child. Although he was passionate about the medium for years, Hamrick didn’t take the leap of faith until he saw the opportunity.

"The truth is, sooner or later, we are going to put out another game and we really hope that you like it," Hamrick said. "Hamrick said on the future of "Fallout". The game continues to inspire him to try and create games that push and persuade the player in a fun way.
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Participation vital in democracy

This is likely my final column for The Daily Gamecock. For about a year, I've attempted to condense the nature of our political climate and convey it to you, the reader, with some objective thought and reflection. I hope it's been at least somewhat enjoyable, or at the very least not a hindrance. With a year of this work under my belt, I think there are a few low points that are vitally important to the survival of our democratic system, I figure it now is as good a time as ever to highlight them.

Two and foremost: Get informed. We live in the most information-rich era of human history. We inhabit the most vibrant communication and information ecosystem the world has ever known. Given that, it's unacceptable to be uninformed.

Keep your eyes open. Check your local paper, and keep a six pack of stuff on your Facebook feed, please. Read primary source documents for yourself, and actually watch or listen to the speeches of politicians. Tune into C-SPAN once or twice and check up on your representatives. Don't let the holier-than-thou, the media, lie to you. "You don't need a weatherman to tell you which way the wind blows."

Next: Get involved. Democracy depends on the lack of normal human beings, not arrogant ones. Are you in favor of getting big money and sugar PACs out of politics? Well, go volunteer for the campaigns you follow in Spread the policies and ideas that you agree with. Work for the betterment of our nation, rather than launching criticisms from the sidelines. "We're not born long enough to be busy dying."

This point nearest to my heart: Engage in debates. At some point, open political debate among peers, friends or coworkers became taboo. Stop getting into a war between the political climate and convey it to you, the reader, with some objective thought and reflection. I hope it's been at least somewhat enjoyable, or at the very least not a hindrance. With a year of this work under my belt, I think there are a few low points that are vitally important to the survival of our democratic system, I figure it now is as good a time as ever to highlight them.

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South Carolina is slated to host the 2016 SEC Men’s Tennis Championship that will begin Wednesday and run through the weekend. The Gamecocks will enter the tournament as significant underdogs, ranked No. 11 in a 13-team field. It was a season of highs and lows for the Gamecocks’ Men’s Tennis team. They finished with a regular season record of 13-14 and went just 4-8 in conference play.

Joe Crevier
@JOSEPHMCREVIER

The Gamecocks will face Arkansas in their first match of the tournament. South Carolina will host twelve other teams in the SEC Men’s Tennis Championship.