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Engage Green: Saving April Showers – March 4

Want to learn how to save money and reduce your environmental impact? As part of [Team Green's Engage Green Sustainability Series](#), [Urban Green Lab](#) is partnering with [Cumberland River Compact](#) and [Mill Creek Watershed Association](#) to learn about the benefits of collecting rain water. There will even be a hands-on demonstration of how to make your own rain barrel! Join the workshop on Wednesday, March 4 at 6pm at the Cumberland River Compact Bridge Building. More details [here](#).

“Wrenched” Film Screening – March 6

Friends of Beaman Park is hosting a screening of the film “Wrenched,” based on Edward Abbey's

As Nashville has had record low temperatures, Vanderbilt has taken strides to keep energy use down. The Martha Rivers Ingram Commons held the inaugural Commons Unplugged Week in the middle of February, which celebrated sustainability, natural resource conservation and energy conservation. The energy competition portion of Commons Unplugged saw decreases in energy use for several of the Commons Houses, despite the extreme frigid temperatures and severe weather event that week! Now that the weather is moderating a bit and students leave for spring break, remember to [adjust](#) your thermostats accordingly! Additional information about the stories and events included in this newsletter are available on the [SustainVU website](#) and [Facebook](#) page. Have a sustainable March and a green St. Patrick's Day!

Andrea George, Director
Sustainability and Environmental Management Office
Vanderbilt University (615) 322-4551 | [e-mail](#) | [Web site](#)



environmental activism, at the Beaman Park Nature Center on Friday, March 6 at 5pm. More details [here](#).

Old House Fair – March 7

The [Metropolitan Historical Commission Foundation](#) and partners are hosting the Old House Fair on Saturday, March 7 from 9am-3pm at the Sevier Park Community Center. The Old House Fair is a free all-day event featuring new ideas, practical advice, innovative materials, and quality service for homeowners looking to learn more about sustainable and historic products and services for their home. Presentations and demonstrations will occur all day highlighting specific topics. Join the many exhibitors and presenters to learn tips for planning and executing your next home project! More details [here](#).

ELPAR National Conference: Public Utility and the Low Carbon Future – March 9

The Environmental Law Policy Annual Review ([ELPAR](#)) welcomes Professor William Boyd of the University of Colorado Law School as a part of its annual Nashville conference to discuss the importance of a revitalized and expanded notion of public utility for efforts to decarbonize the U.S. power sector. The event will be held March 9, 12:00-1:15pm in the Flynn Auditorium at Vanderbilt University. A panel of experts will join him in discussing this proposal: Amanda Garcia, Staff Attorney, Southern

VORTEX and the New Dialect celebrate Lou Harrison and The American Gamelan

Nashville has the unique opportunity to experience the American Gamelan after



its 900-mile journey to the Blair School of Music during the VORTEX percussion concert on March 15 at 8pm in Ingram Hall. The audience will be able to experience this unforgettable orchestra made from scrap materials that is so rare that only four exist in the world. The performance will explore the cultural frontiers opened by composers Henry Cowell, John Pennington and Lou Harrison, who often integrate themes of sustainability and environmentalism into their compositions.

The Sustainability and Environmental Management Office ([SEMO](#)) is a co-sponsor of the event and has joined forces with Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Responsibility ([SPEAR](#)) and [Kefi Project](#) to construct an interactive and educational art piece onsite in the plaza of the [Blair School of Music](#) that will celebrate reuse and recycling. The art installation will demonstrate the wide range of options we have to reuse and recycle everyday items, and echoes the percussion/musicality of the Gamelan by being a musical instrument itself. There will be three interactive pillars, each representing one of the three pillars of consumer sustainability — reduce, reuse, recycle — and each pillar will be made out of a different recyclable material.

Various events will be occurring during the day in association with VORTEX and the American Gamelan concert, starting at noon. Find the full schedule of events and more details [here](#).

VORTEX will perform with Nashville's newest contemporary dance company [New Dialect](#), Blair violinist Carolyn Huebl, composer John Pennington, and Camaldolese Monk and tenor Cyprian Consiglio.

[VORTEX](#) is a bold, innovative and cutting edge ensemble that regularly crosses the line between rigorous conventional chamber music and unexpected theater. VORTEX prepares students for the volatile world of 21st-century percussion

Environmental Law Center; Suedeen G. Kelly, Chair of Energy Regulatory, Markets & Enforcement Practice, Akia Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld; and John Myers, Director of Policy, Tennessee Valley Authority. More details [here](#).

Urban Green Lab Compost Workshop – March 7, 14, and 21

Looking for a free, easy, fun way to improve your gardens? Start with the soil! Learn about the art and science of composting in the workshop series presented by [Urban Green Lab](#) every Saturday in March 10:30-11:30am at area Nashville Public Library Locations. March 7 will feature Dr. Chris Vangas (Center for Science Outreach, Vanderbilt University) at the Edmonson Pike Library, March 14 will feature David Cook (UT Agriculture Extension) at the Inglewood Library, and March 21 will feature Ed Wansing (the Compost Company, LLC) at the Bellevue Library. More details [here](#).

Raised-Bed Gardening with the Experts – March 12

The Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center presents “Raised-Bed Gardening with the Experts” featuring Bill Randles and Laura Barker of Vanderbilt Plant Operations’ grounds maintenance team on Thursday, March 12. The talk is scheduled from noon to 1 p.m. at the VRWC Demonstration Kitchen. More details [here](#).

performance while grounding them in the historic works of great composers. It challenges them to move beyond the printed page, to play with confidence, stage presence, and an ability to embrace cross-disciplinary performance opportunities.

Time when climate was topsy-turvy in Western U.S. aids climate prediction efforts



Climate scientists now put the odds that the American Southwest is headed into a 30-year “mega drought” at 50/50. Meanwhile, the forecast for the Pacific Northwest is continued warming with slightly drier summers and even wetter winters.

However, 21,000 years ago, at the peak of the last Ice Age, a period known as the Last Glacial Maximum, the Southwest was wetter than it is today – much wetter – and the Northwest was drier – much drier.

A team of scientists from Vanderbilt and Stanford universities have created the first comprehensive map of the topsy-turvy climate of the period and are using it to test and improve the global climate models that have been developed to predict how precipitation patterns will change in the future. Their efforts are described in a paper published online on Feb. 23 by the journal *Nature Geoscience*.

“Most of the previous research of the past climate in this region is based on detailed studies of specific sites,” said primary author [Jessica Oster](#), assistant professor of earth and environmental sciences at Vanderbilt University. “We combined these records to create a detailed map of past climate change in the American West. We then compared this map to computer climate models to understand what caused these changes.”

“Our previous research used field studies to understand the history of climate change in the Western U.S.,” said study coauthor [Kate Maher](#), assistant professor of geological and environmental sciences at Stanford University. “It was amazing to see how our results, when combined with work of many other

50K Tree Day with TN Environmental Council – March 14

Join [Tennessee Environmental Council](#) in meeting their goal to plant a total of 50,000 trees at multiple locations in each of Tennessee’s 95 counties! Tree planting was rescheduled due to weather and is now occurring on Saturday, March 14 at 10:00am. Individuals can register to plant in locations around their county with volunteer groups, or homeowners and businesses can register to pick up 5-10 trees to plant on their own property! Registration and more details [here](#).

Blair School of Music American Gamelan Concert – March 15

The Blair School of Music’s VORTEX percussion group will host a concert featuring the American Gamelan, an instrument constructed of scrap materials that is so rare, there are only four in the world, on Sunday March 15 at 8pm in Ingram Hall at the Blair School of Music. The Sustainability and Environmental Management Office ([SEMO](#)) is co-sponsoring the event and has joined efforts with Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Responsibility ([SPEAR](#)) and the [Kefi Project](#) to construct an interactive and educational art piece to celebrate reuse and recycling that will be displayed in the lobby of Ingram Hall before the concert. The three composers whose music is featured in the concert, Lou Harrison, Henry Cowell and John Pennington, have

research groups and compared to the newest generation of climate models, revealed a consistent story about how rainfall patterns were altered in the past.”

Read the full article published in Research News at Vanderbilt [here](#).

Vanderbilt researcher Michael Vandenberg publishes article on U.S. climate policy and behavioral change

Current Vanderbilt professor and researcher Michael Vandenberg partnered with past Vanderbilt assistant professor Amanda Carrico, among others, to publish an article in [Nature Climate Change](#) about the importance of behavioral change in U.S. climate policy.



In its proposed rule published back in June, the Environmental Protection Agency ([EPA](#)) suggested that one key tool that states and utility companies can use to meet their required emissions reduction goals is what the agency calls “demand-side energy efficiency.” For instance, significant energy savings – and emission cuts – could be reaped by programs that incentivize people to buy more energy-efficient home appliances that encourage buildings to use energy more efficiently, or that change individual behavior itself to reduce energy consumption.

More specifically, the [EPA](#) lists energy efficiency as one of four “[building blocks](#)” that can help states reach their emissions reductions goals, calling it “a proven, low-cost way to reduce emissions, which will save consumers and businesses money and mean less carbon pollution.” The agency suggests that a 1.5 percent reduction in a state’s emissions might be achieved through this route.

But according to a group of behavioral researchers writing in the latest issue of [Nature Climate Change](#) and led by the University of Colorado, Boulder’s Amanda Carrico, EPA is setting a “very modest” target here. As they note, some estimates for how much energy could be saved by energy efficiency initiatives — including programs that try to directly change people’s behavior — run as high as 23 percent of total

made a life-long practice of incorporating sustainable themes into their music. Be sure to stop by the concert and enjoy the installation! More details [here](#).

Tree Planting with Team Green Adventures and Hands On Nashville – March 21

Join the countywide effort to restore our waterways to pre-flood conditions or better by planting native trees in damaged riparian areas on Saturday, March 21 from 9am-12pm. The flood-damaged riparian areas are important natural spaces that provide habitats to many species and protect our waterways. More details [here](#).

Climate Connections – March 24

Climate Connections is an event presented by [SPEAR](#) that addresses the intersection of environmental sustainability with other topics relevant to Vanderbilt students' lives. The event will feature a keynote speech followed by a question and answer session to foster open discussion of sustainability issues. In addition, there will be numerous environmental organizations tabling during the event to connect students to sustainable resources in Nashville. See the [SPEAR website](#) for more details as they become available.

Urban Agriculture Series: DIY Raised Beds – March 28



U.S. electricity demand. In terms of emissions, they continue, ramping up household focused conservation

programs could conceivably lead to a seven percent cut overall.

Meanwhile, one of the biggest changes in the structure of our energy system in a long time — the rollout of 50 million smart meters, with more on the way — has thus far failed to achieve its full energy-savings potential due to a failure to take human and behavioral factors into account, and to be user-friendly. Simply providing people with smart meter data in real time in a form that helps them understand how much power they're using and how much it's costing them could inspire many behavioral changes that could add up to big energy savings — and big emissions cuts.

It's in this context that Carrico and her colleagues call on EPA to make sure that they carefully design the efficiency-focused, electricity demand-reduction side of the Clean Power Plan. The EPA's approach, they write, is a "rare move" and represents a major new precedent — or, it could. Behavioral programs are "often viewed as minor adjuncts to more traditional regulatory actions, not as a core part of the response to energy and climate challenges," they note. The evidence above suggests there are many reasons that should change.

Read the full article published by the Washington Post [here](#).

Family tradition helps expand environmental and sustainability studies

A member of the College of Arts and Science Board of Visitors since 2005, Lester "Ruff" Fant was one of the first to raise his hand and support the school's efforts to strengthen its courses and programming in environmental and sustainability studies. Over the years, Fant helped bolster various initiatives through this fund, including environmental and sustainability studies.

In 2011, Fant's support helped kick-start the Sustainability Project, led by the American Studies program. Through speakers, courses, workshops, road trips, films and conferences, the project created new momentum on campus for

A raised bed may be the solution to your gardening problems: compacted soil, bad soil, or too little space. Raised beds make it easier to maintain a healthy garden by keeping out unwanted weeds and making gardening easier on your back. Josh Corlew, from Hands On Nashville's [Urban Agriculture Program](#), will guide you through the benefits of raised beds and how to make your own on March 28, from 11am-12:30pm at the Hands On Nashville Urban Farm (361 Wimpole Drive). More details [here](#).

Green Alley Rain Garden Planting – March 28

The [Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods](#), [Impact Nashville](#), [Hands On Nashville](#) and [Cumberland River Compact](#) are joining forces with community leaders to plant free rain gardens in the Nations Neighborhood. The rain gardens will help reduce the pollution traveling from this area to Richland Creek and improves alleys in the neighborhood to be more walkable and safe. Rain garden planting is taking place March 28, 9:00am-12:30pm. More details [here](#).



environmental issues. This effort also included the Cumberland Project, which ran intensive workshops for Vanderbilt faculty members on how to incorporate significant environmental or sustainability components into their courses.

Ultimately, these projects led to the establishment of the undergraduate program in environmental and sustainability studies and a new minor in the field, launched in 2012.

In 2014, Fant and his wife, Susan, made a significant commitment to the College of Arts and Science to establish, among other things, an endowed Lester G. "Ruff" Fant III Dean's Fund and the James Thornton Fant Chair in Sustainability Studies. The first holder of the James Thornton Fant Chair is David Hess, who directs the Environmental and Sustainability Studies program and is the associate director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Energy and Environment.

Hess said that the Fants' most recent gift is opportune in many ways. "The diverse efforts of Vanderbilt faculty—the Vanderbilt Institute for Energy and Environment, the Climate Change Research Network and the Cumberland Project for curriculum development—all laid the groundwork for making Vanderbilt a center for trans-institutional research and teaching on the environment. Their gift appears at a critical juncture in the development of environmental research and teaching in this university," he said.

Read the full article published by Vanderbilt News [here](#).

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contact the Sustainability and Environmental Management
Office at sustainvu@vanderbilt.edu or (615) 322-2057.

