

## THE GREEN CORNER by Gordon Bates

In June, Wanda and I traveled to PA to visit Waynesburg University so she could celebrate with her 50th reunion classmates. It's a beautiful campus in a small city in the southwest corner of that state. During the stay, I was able to attend a seminar on climate change as it is being addressed by the University, particularly its student body. The information shared was fascinating.

Professor Janet Paladino stressed the reality of climate change and the dangers being created by the rising level of carbon dioxide and other green-house gases in our atmosphere. She quoted the National Wildlife Federation's reminder that, "It takes a Big Step to make a smaller Footprint."

The two major responses to climate change, she said, include:

- **Mitigation:** Reducing, where possible, the pace of GHG accumulation and fixing what can be changed. Much has been accomplished in this realm of action.
- **Adaptation:** Restructuring our way of life to cope with climate changes we cannot control. Only a small segment of the population and very few political leaders have faced this level of action honestly or thoughtfully.



The consequences of not taking these two responses seriously, she stated, will be a measure of suffering in the future far in excess of any sacrifices and adjustment we make now to control what we can and prepare for what we can't. Her answer to skeptics is to list the things that can be done to help the earth and conserve resources whether Climate Change occurs as is predicted today by the vast majority of the world's scientists.

Dr. Paladino praised her University for the mitigation efforts taken or underway to conserve energy, avoid waste, provide recycling bins for paper and plastic, and raise the consciousness of all its faculty and student body. At the same time she was disturbed by the skepticism and apathy that still prevails among the 2500 men and women in the student body (and probably in the faculty).

On Paper Recycling: 8% always recycle; 59% sometimes; and 32% never recycle. Most startling, out of the last two groups, 19% stated bluntly that they didn't care and didn't see a problem.

On Plastic Recycling: 7 % consistently; 83% claimed they would if more containers were provided. The University plans to provide more.

On Electricity Use: It has been determined at Waynesburg that students need only 50 % of the electricity provided. Here's a factor that could mean big savings in energy consumed.

On Food Waste Disposal: Analysis showed that over 8 lbs. of food/student is discarded each day, and although composting has been suggested, the administration is resistant.

On Enjoying the Natural World of the Campus: 85 -90 % admit that the only time they go outside is to walk to another building or to get in the car to go somewhere.

My assumption is that these students are probably typical of colleges and universities across the country. Ask your own family members in college or university how their schools would compare and let the Green Corner know what you discover. **Maybe one or more of our student members would be interested in and willing to submit a Green Corner about their school's Climate Change mitigation or adaptation. The invitation is hereby extended.**

*Gordon*