

Planet reaches a deadly carbon footprint number

by Jonathan Pappalardo

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Photo Courtesy of 350 Website

In lieu of a final exam, Ann Page Stecker's Visions of Nature class, of which I am a part, is bringing Colby-Sawyer and the town of New London together to raise awareness for the 350 movement. T-shirts, stickers, banners, and chalk will be in use to get the message out across campus.

350 translate as "350 parts per million (ppm) carbon dioxide in the atmosphere". Any number beyond 350 and the planet is in grave danger. Earth, the planet we all claim to love so much, currently stands at 385 ppm. If we do not take action than life as we know it will cease to exist.

350 matters because it is a number that we can all grasp. Colby-Sawyer is joining in a world-wide movement where people are raising awareness for 350 and doing so in clever ways - everything from people gathering to form the number 350, to ringing church bells 350 times. 350 Bikers event rode into the center of Salt Lake City, an action that gathered the attention of the local press.

Writer Bill McKibbin has pioneered thinking on this subject through an article he wrote for *Orion* magazine last summer. (I urge you to Google it, the article is a foremost document on the subject). He believes the number is a revelation because it universally has the same meaning for everyone on the planet and blurs the lines between the English and metric systems. As he

puts it, "it is, after all, *global warming*." He suggests lining up 350 water melons at a farmer's market.

But what can you do? We can all log onto 350.org and find little ways to educate the public about 350. No matter what you do, you can make a difference. Do not let Colby-Sawyer's "350 day" be the last we hear about the most important number of our lifetime. The Visions of Nature class is starting the conversation and it is critical you keep it going.

Oct 24 is 350.org's "Planetary Day of Action." Iconic places around the world will be transformed to tattoo 350 into every brain in the world. The least you can do is keep the number in your head, and do whatever it takes to tell the greatest number of people about it. Update your Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter statuses with it. The more people who become educated the better.

Do not wait around for someone else to effect change for you, effect change yourself. Every bit goes a long way in the fight to stop the global climate crisis. So log onto 350.org right now and get involved. Join the "350 ppm" Facebook group. We both know that you will be glad you did.